UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE NINTH CIRCUIT

Appellant, B. 1915 LAHAINA-MAUI CORPORATION, lifornia corporation,

PH TAU TET HEW and HELEN NA HEW, husband and wife, GE TAN and SHIZUKO RUTH husband and wife.

Appellees.

NO. 20419

APPEAL FROM SUMMARY JUDGMENT GRANTED BY THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF HAWALL

Chief Judge Martin Pence

BRIEF FOR APPELLEES

FILED DEC 11 - 1 FROME M. E. L. C.

J. RUSSELL CADES WILLIAM M. SWOPE 165 South King Street Honolulu, Hawaii

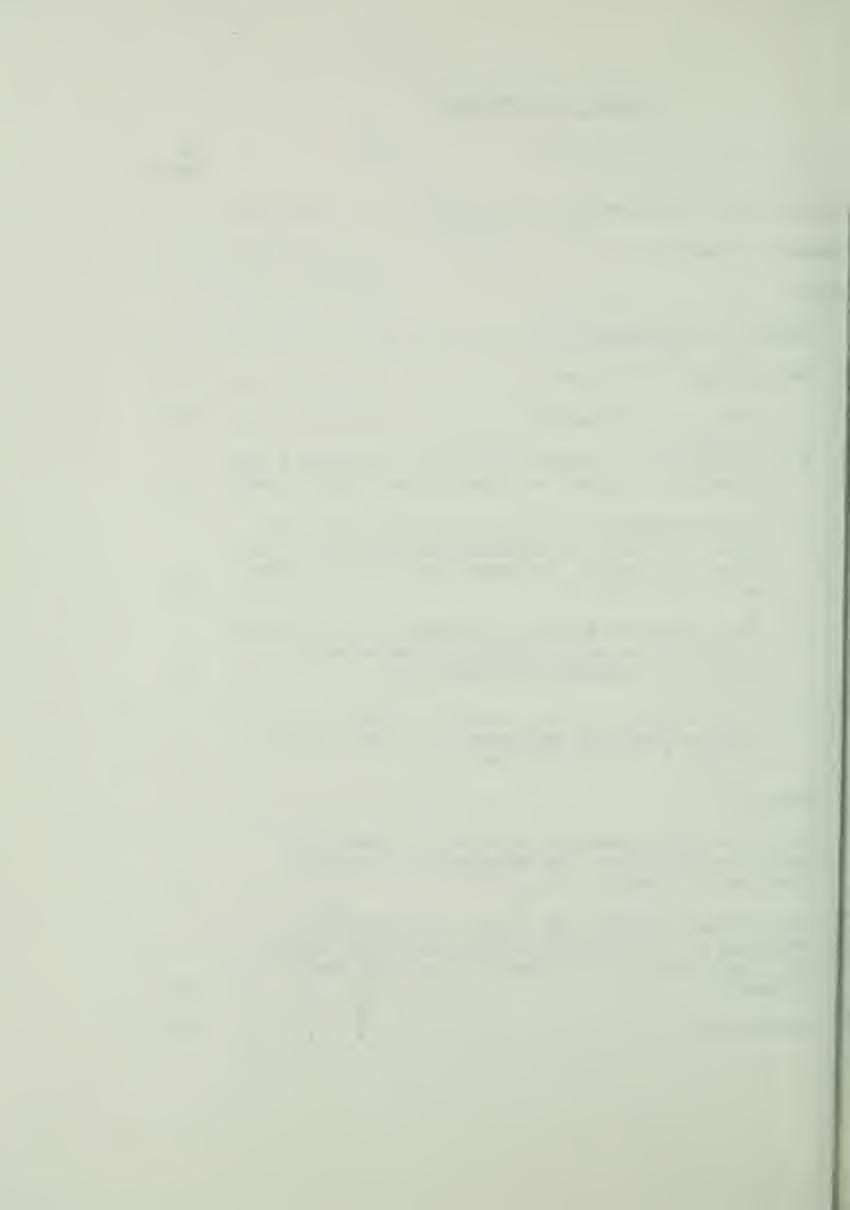
Attorneys for Appellees

ounsel

H, WILD, BEEBE & CADES

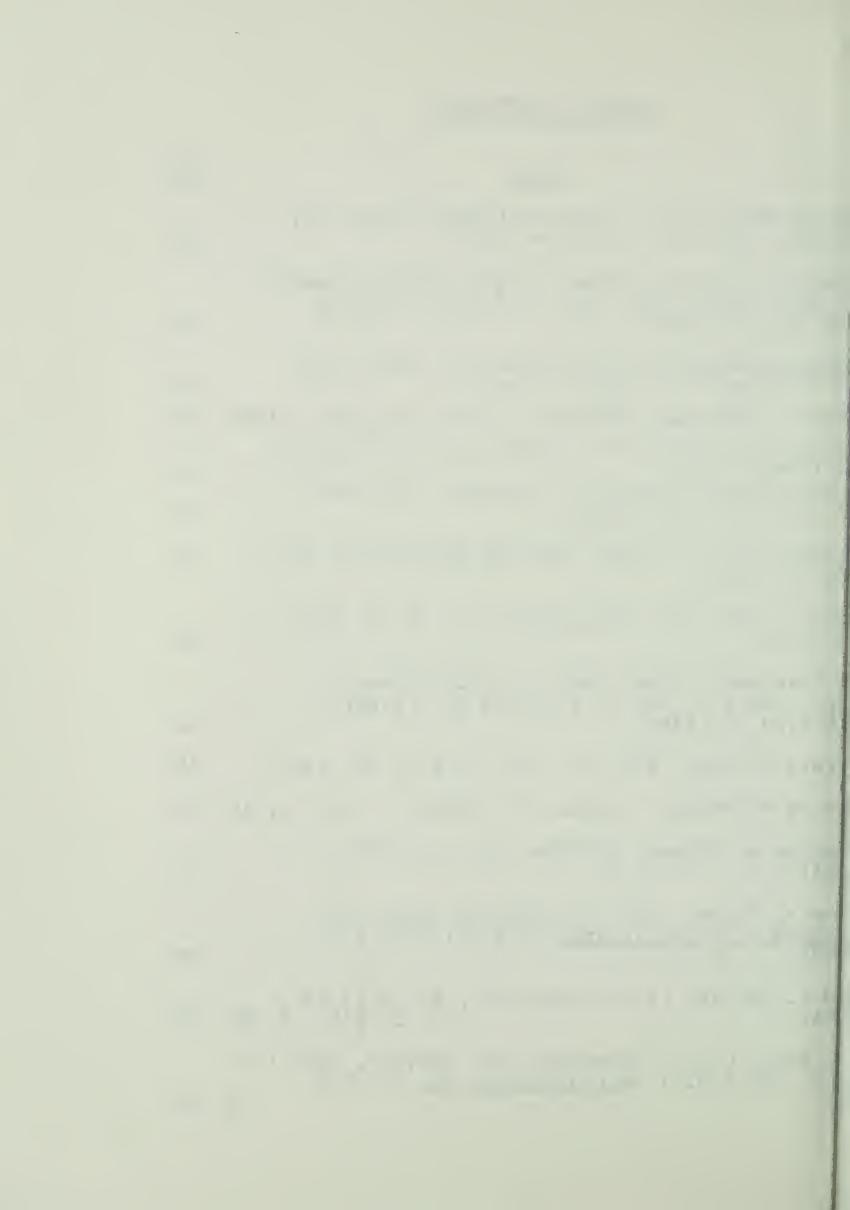
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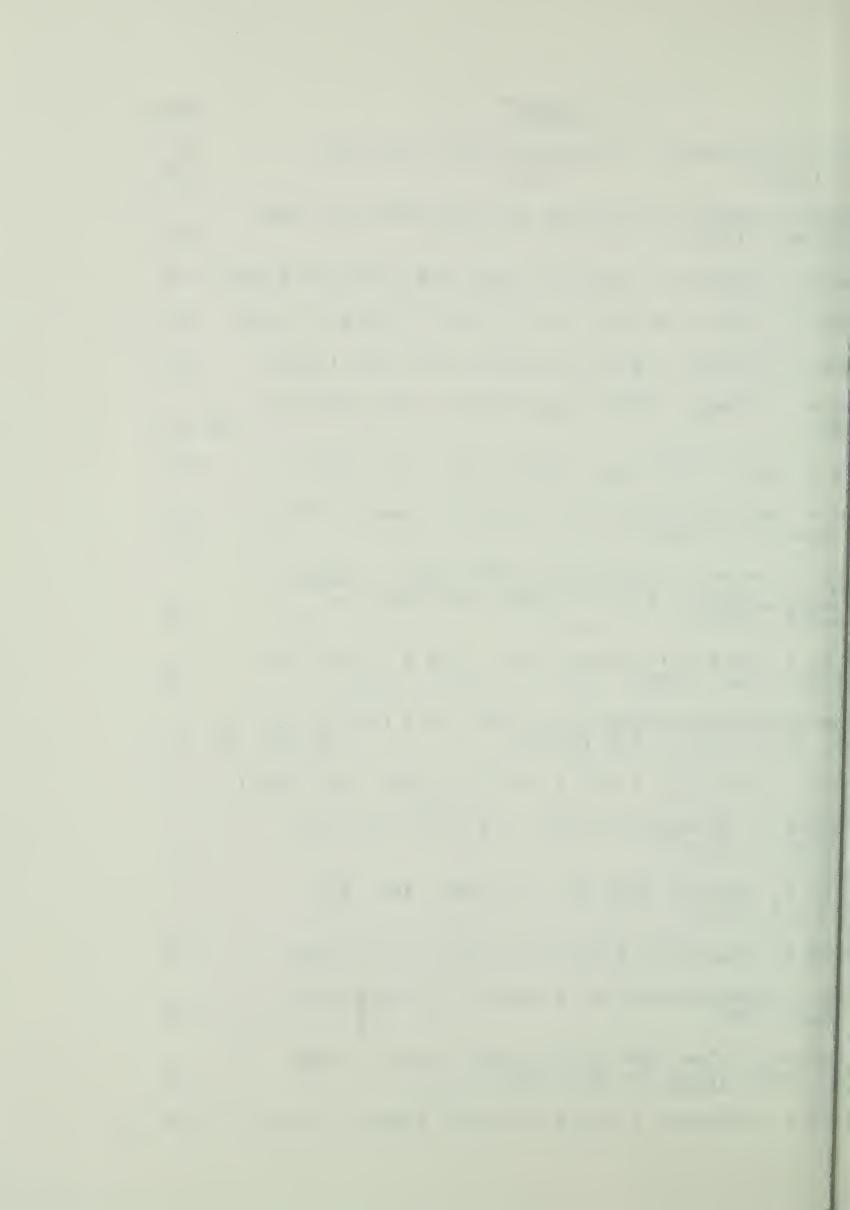


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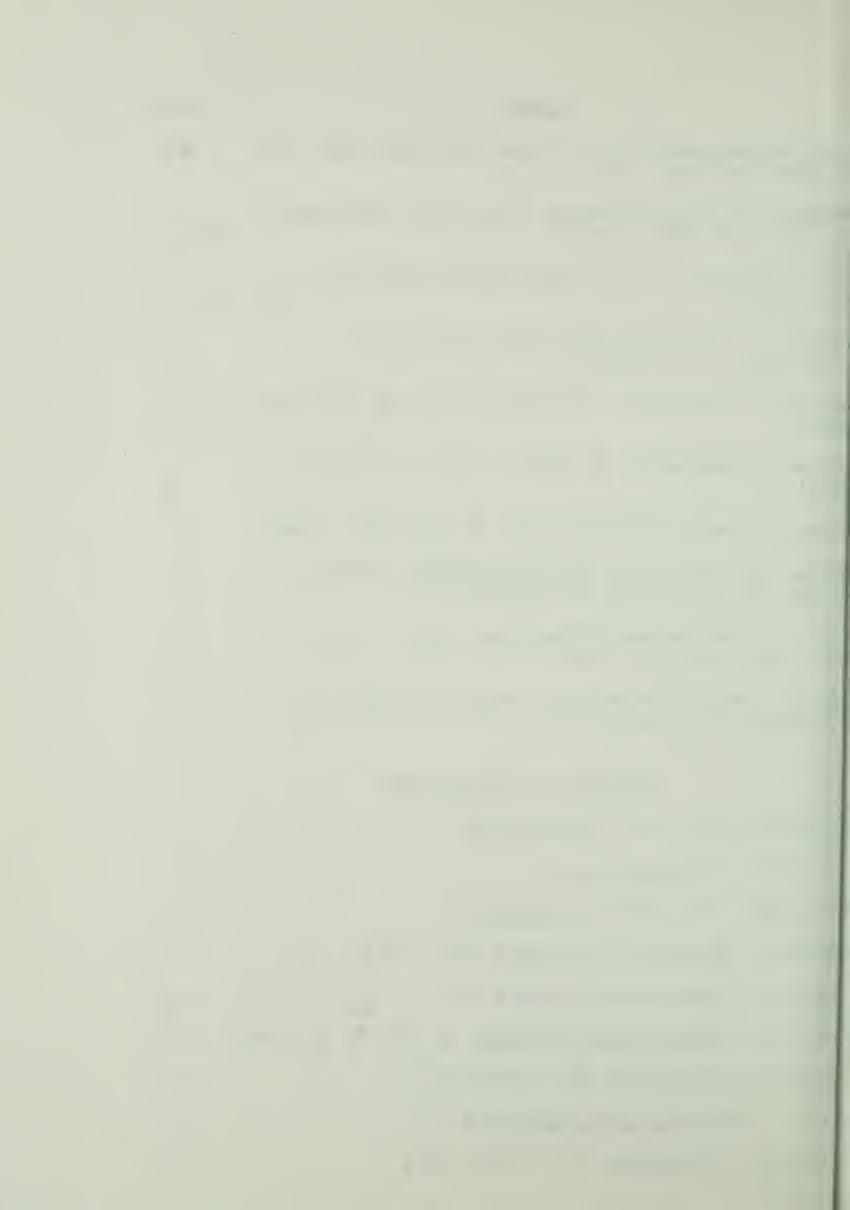
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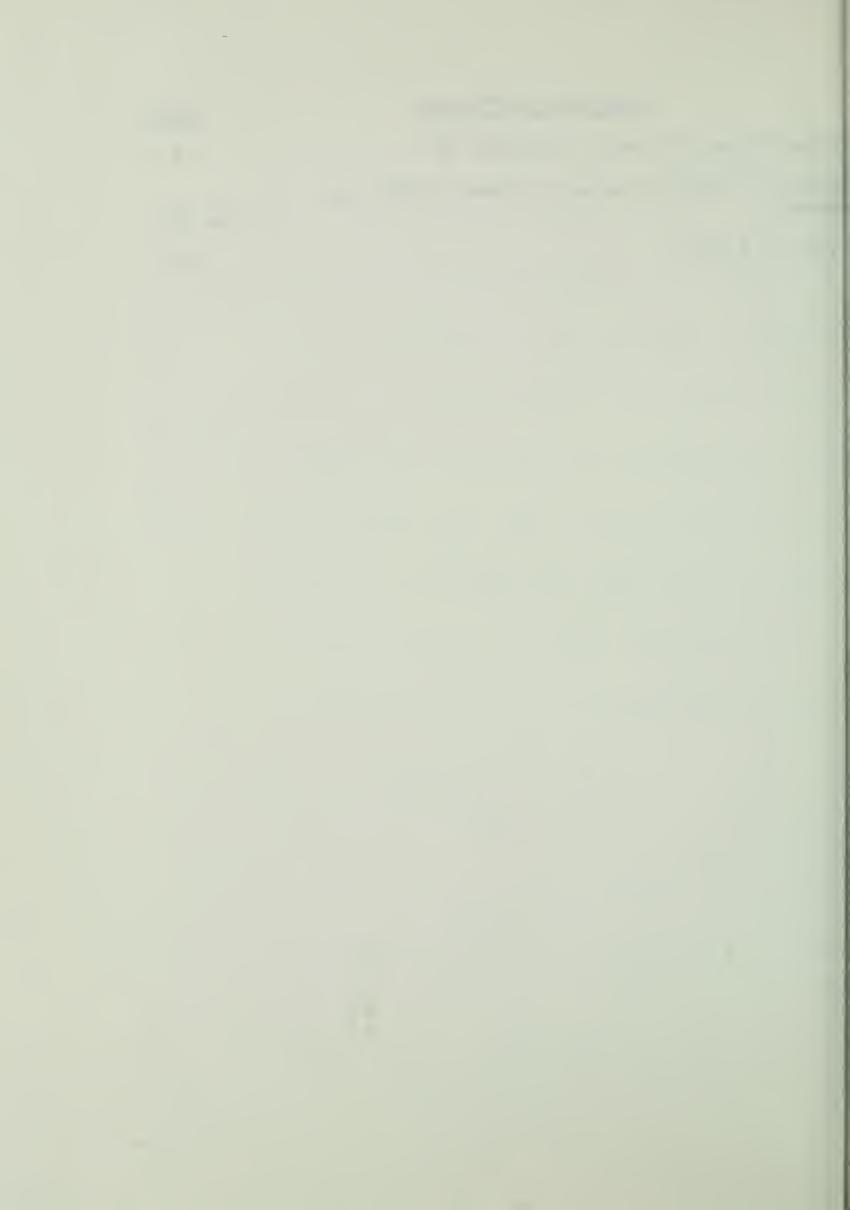
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UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE NINTH CIRCUIT

LAHAINA-MAUI CORPORATION, alifornia corporation,

Appellant,

NO. 20419

V.

TEPH TAU TET HEW and HELEN ONA HEW, husband and wife, RGE TAN and SHIZUKO RUTH, husband and wife,

Appellees.

APPEAL FROM SUMMARY
JUDGMENT GRANTED BY
THE UNITED STATES
DISTRICT COURT FOR
THE DISTRICT OF HAWAII

Chief Judge Martin Pence

BRIEF FOR APPELLEES

JURISDICTIONAL STATEMENT

Appellees concur in the jurisdictional statement the Appellant.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

On June 30, 1965, judgment was entered against Appellant on the Appellees' motion for summary judgment der Rule 56 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure 119-121). The court below found that there was no material fact and stated in its sision that it relied upon the language of the alleged of the Lease", the Complaint, the Answers (presumably to a Complaint and the Interrogatories), and the Notice of

rcise of Option of Lease for its decision (R:110).

Appellant did not file an opposing affidavit 120). The court below had before it the pleadings and ibits attached thereto, the depositions of Paul T. F. Low Philip H. Ching, and the Appellees' Answers to the Appelt's Interrogatories (R:120). Appellant's statement is omplete and misleading, and therefore Appellees will iew certain undisputed facts that were before the court ow.

On February 14, 1963, the Appellees and the ellant's predecessors in interest engaged in informal cussions in Lahaina, Maui, State of Hawaii, relating to purchase of approximately 144,192 square feet of Maui ch property owned by the Appellees in Lahaina (R:2-3,44).

On the morning of February 15, 1963, the Appellees to Honolulu for further discussions of the purchase and possibility of leasing this Maui beach property 1/3,44,77, Dep.Ching p.4). Appellees, not experienced in

Appellant states on page 3 of its Brief that on this date the negotiations were "completed for the lease". This is inaccurate, on the record, since the Appellees at no time have ever conceded that negotiations were ever completed to the extent that a meeting of the minds had been reached as to the terms and provisions of the proposed lease. However, on the present record, no genuine issue of any material fact arises because the court below, in effect, assumed for the purposes of its decision that negotiations were completed and that no contract resulted or could result from the alleged option and its alleged acceptance alone (R:105-107); A fortior, if negotiations were not completed and there remained essential terms to be agreed on, then clearly the Appellees were entitled to summary judgment.

_____ - Design Committee and the later with

leasing of rea! property (R:92), were not represented by usel at either of the meetings (R:80) although during the clulu meeting, the Appellant was represented by a member the local bar (Dep.Ching p.2-8). It was this member of the (acting under the directions and instructions of the clant's predecessors in interest) who hurriedly drafted paper entitled "Option to Lease" (R:3,44, Dep.Ching p.5,10).

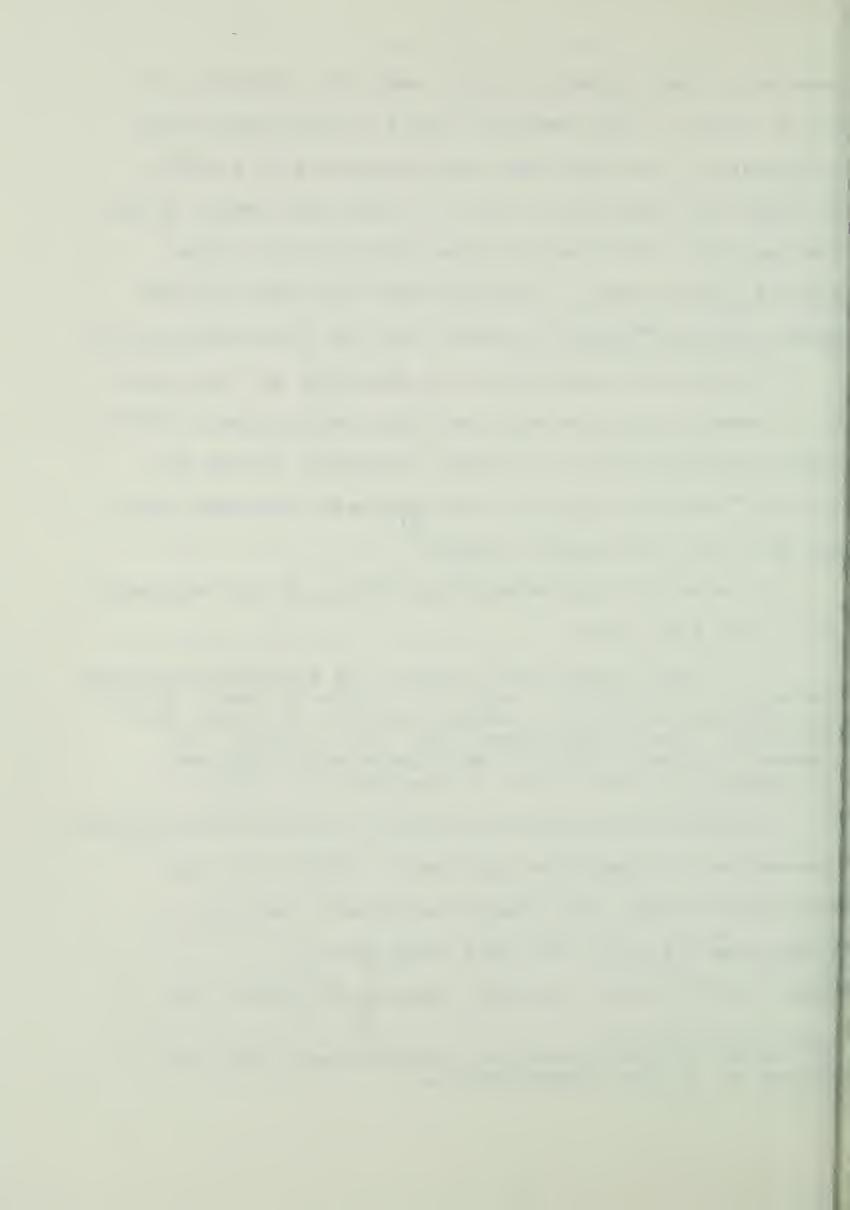
The document granted to the Appellant an "exclusive on to lease" the above mentioned Maui beach property (R:8). ellees understood that this grant prevented, during the of the "exclusive option", the Appellees from negotiating $\frac{1}{2}$ ease with any other person (R:84).

An essential and material provision of the "exclusive on" is the following:

"Said lease shall contain the standard provisions normally contained in a lease for similar property situate in the State of Hawaii together with the provision that the Lessor shall subordinate their fee to permit the Lessee to obtain financing which provision is by way of example, but not by way of limitation." (R:9)

A proper subordination provision in the lease was basic essential to enable the Appellant to obtain for the fit of both lessor and lessee the proper financing a proposed 2-3 story, 200 unit "combination" tment hotel" project costing between \$1,000,000 and

his is the obvious conclusion from the use of the word exclusive" in the alleged option.



00,000 (Dep.Low p.9; Dep.Ching p.14,27,29). It was cond by the attorney acting for the Appellant at the time he negotiations, that a subordination provision in a lease is not a standard or usual provision (Dep. g p.7,16).

On April 22, 1963, the Appellees extended the term he exclusive option to August 1, 1963 (R:4,44-45).

Between February 15, 1963 and July 25, 1963, a e was prepared by Mr. Dwight Rush, a member of the Hawaii (Dep.Ching p.23). This lease was sent to California but never submitted to the Appellees (Dep.Ching p.23).

Prior to July 25, 1963, the Appellees hired Mr. and Mirikitani, a member of the Hawaii bar, as their rney (R:80). On or about that date, Mr. Frank Nunes from California law firm of Nunes & Crews, Hayward, California, onally delivered to the law offices of Mr. Mirikitani an ecuted lease (R:13-36,85). This second lease contained isions which are neither standard or usual provisions ally contained in Hawaiian leases (R:4-5,45). The proposed ors named in this lease were the Appellees (R:13), and the osed Lessee was the Appellant (R:13). The lease was for same term mentioned in the alleged option (R:8,13), at same annual rental (R:8,13-14) with, however, a provision iring the Appellees to join in a mortgage or deed of

he California lease tendered by the Appellant describes he project as a "hotel or garden apartments" (R:24-25).

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st securing a loan in a sum not exceeding ninety per t (90%) of the value of the land and improvements (R:22). It is lease contained an option to purchase (R:32-33) which not mentioned in the alleged option yet apparently was $\frac{1}{2}$ cussed on February 15, 1963 (Dep.Ching p.24).

On July 26, 1963, the option was assigned to the ellant (R:5,45) and on this same date the Appellant purtedly exercised the alleged option by signing and ivering to the Appellees a "Notice of Exercise of Option Lease" (R:5,45).

On August 1, 1963, the alleged option expired

10).

On August 23, 1963, the Appellees formally advised Appellant's local attorney that since no agreement had n reached with the Appellant, the Appellees considered alleged option null and void and tendered the "exclusive ion" payment made by the Appellant (R:5,6-45).

On August 29, 1963, the complaint was filed la-39). On September 11, 1963, the case was removed the United States District Court for the District of aii (R:40-42). On October 21, 1963, the Appellant filed answer and counterclaim for specific performance (R:43-66). exed to this counterclaim was a third proposed form of lease pared by the Appellant (R:47-66). Appellant alleged that

Other examples of 'non-standard' provisions included in this lease were an extension clause and an arbitration clause (R:29-30,32).

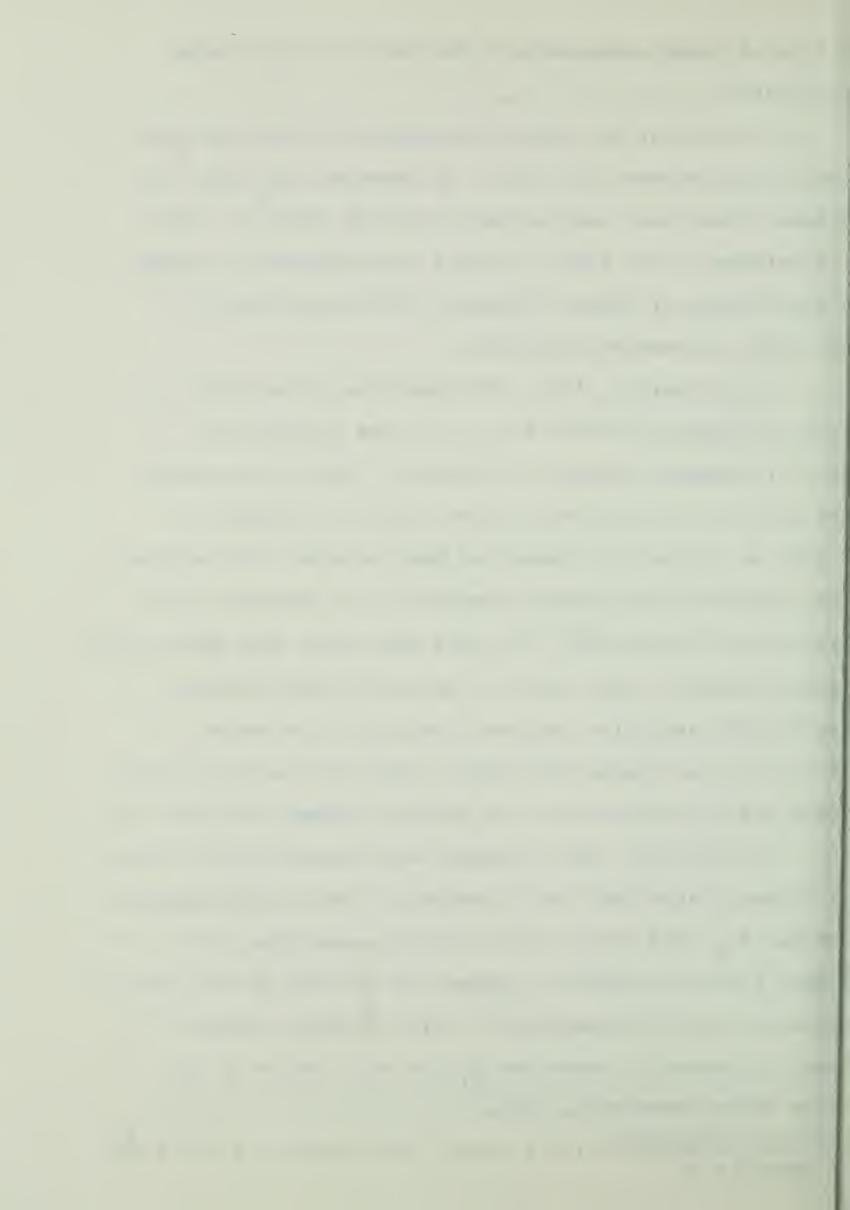
Communication of the second se - 03 The state of the s s form of lease complied with the terms of the alleged ion (R:46).

On October 25, 1963, the Appellant filed its first ice of lis pendens (R:67-72). On November 16, 1964, the ellees filed their amended reply setting forth the affirive defense of the failure of all the documents to comply h the Statute of Frauds, Chapter 190 Revised Laws of aii 1955, as amended (R:96-98).

On January 5, 1965, the Appellees filed their tion to Dismiss Counterclaim, or in the Alternative, ion for Summary Judgment" (R:99-101). After the hearing the motion the court below ruled orally on January 7, 5 that no contract to lease had been entered into because the uncertainty and indefiniteness of its essential and erial terms (R:105-109). On this same date, the Appellant's orney offered in open court to waive the subordination use (R:108) and after further briefing on the waiver stion the court below on June 14, 1965 entered its written ision granting the motion for summary judgment (R:114-118).

On June 30, 1965, judgment was entered which, among er things, cancelled the lis pendens filed by the Appellant October 25, 1963 (R:119-121). On the same date, the ellant filed its notice of appeal (R:122-123) as well as econd notice of lis pendens (R:124-129) which notice been subsequently cancelled by the court below by the ision dated November 2, 1965.

For the convenience of the court, the Decision is set furth in Appendix A.



ARGUMENT

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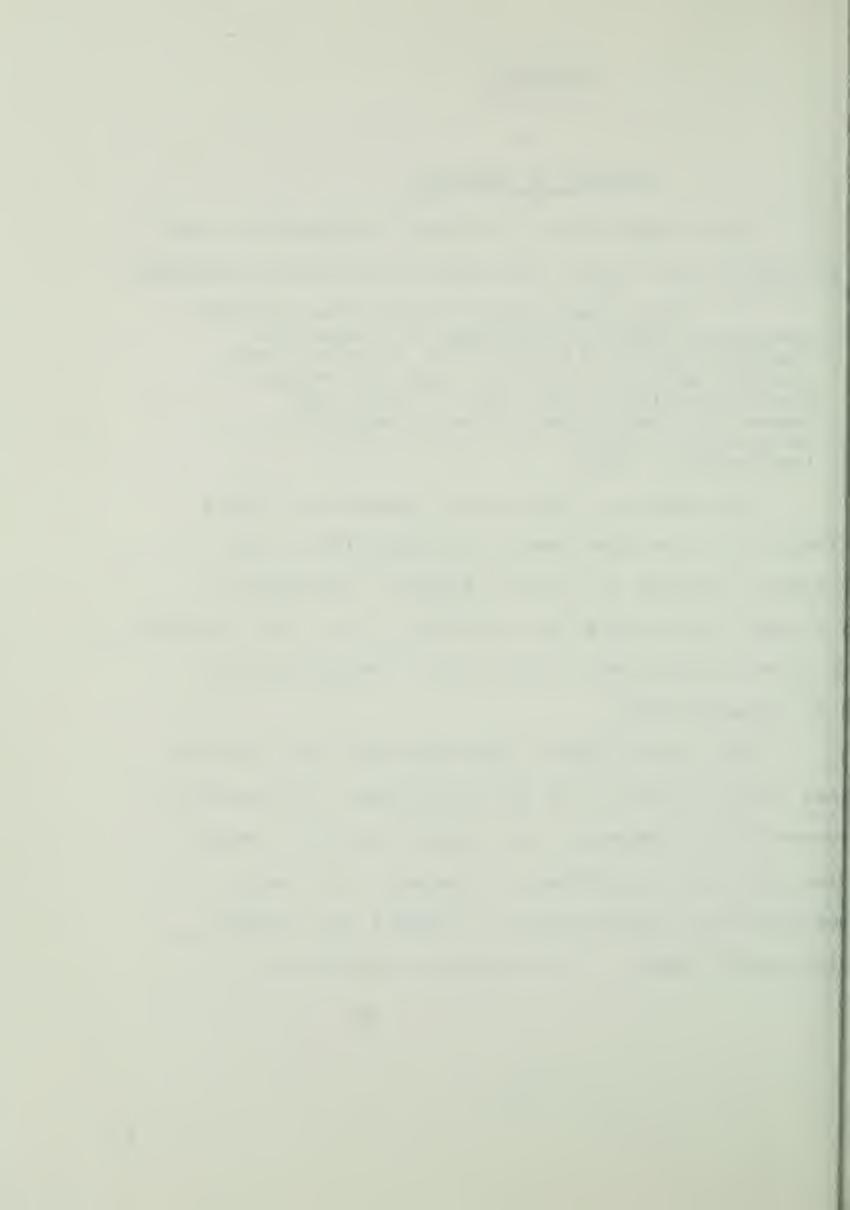
SUMMARY OF ARGUMENT

The alleged option to lease the Appellant seeks enforce in this action includes the following paragraph:

"Said lease shall contain the standard provisions normally contained in a lease for similar property situate in the State of Hawaii together with the provision that the Lessor shall subordinate their fee to permit the Lessee to obtain financing which provision is by way of example, but not by way of limitation." (R:9)

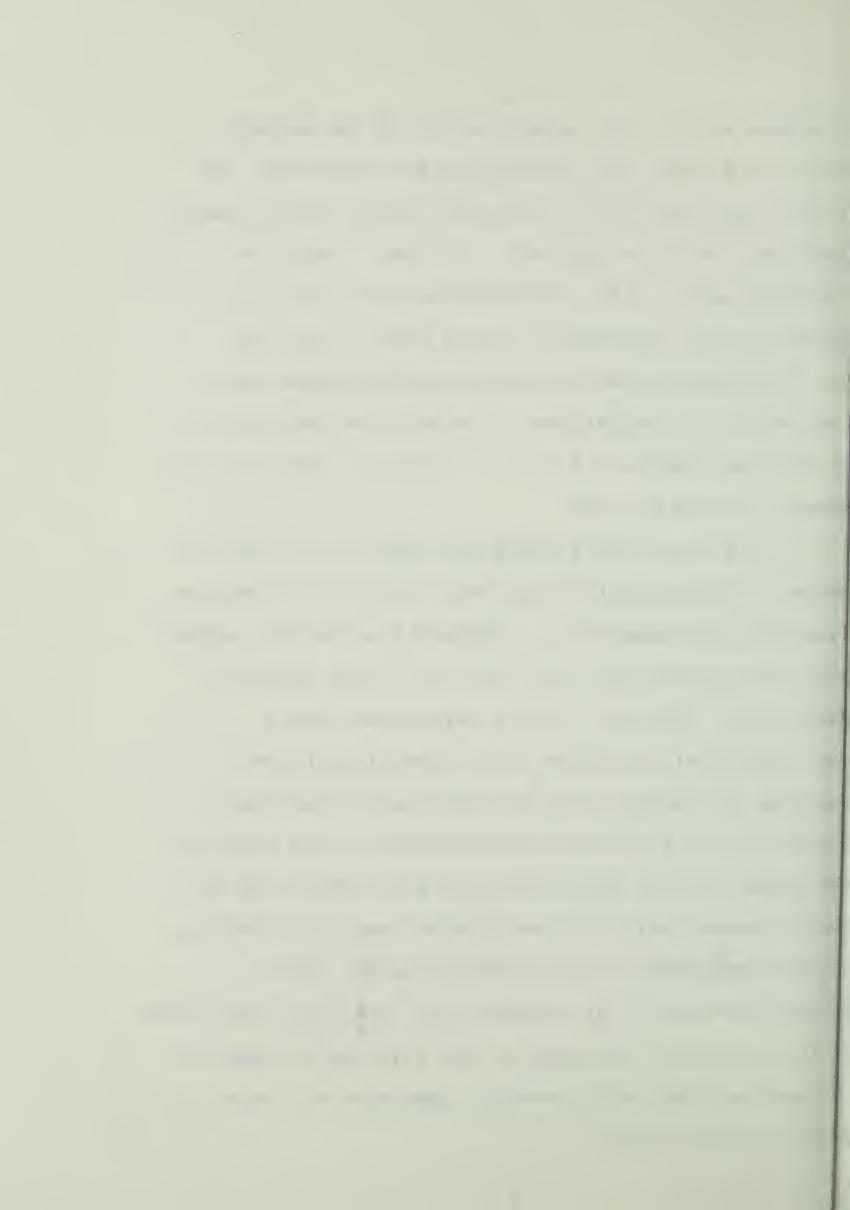
The meaning of the above language is that a ovision that the Appellees would subordinate their esimple interest in the real property described in ealleged option would be included in the lease together the other non-standard provisions not mentioned and to be negotiated.

The court properly held that the subordination ause as set forth in the option to lease is necessarily essential and material term thereof and as a matter law the above subordination language is so vague, definite and uncertain that it renders the alleged tion unenforceable. A subordination clause is



ount of the loan, the interest rate of the loan, the riod of the loan and the purpose to which the proceeds the loan are to be applied. In order to enforce alleged option with the subordination provision cluded, a court necessarily would have to include the subordination provision which terms were agreed to by the parties. The court below properly ld that, as a matter of law, it could not make such an reement for the parties.

The Appellant's contention that it is entitled waive the subordination provision would still require e court's enforcement of a contract that was not agreed on by the parties and this the court below properly fused to do. The court below determined that a oper subordination clause would benefit both the ssor and the lessee since the parties contemplated construction of a completed structure on the premises be leased and the magnitude of the structure and the ssor's reversionary interest therein were all tied to properly negotiated subordination clause. The pellant's waiver of an essential but not fully negotiated rm of a contract furnishes no basis giving a remedy on alleged contract which was not completed and hence not nding on either party.



SUBORDINATION CLAUSE

Appellant's principal contention is that the language . . Lessor shall subordinate their fee to permit the Lessee obtaining financing . . " is definite enough for specific formance of the alleged option because all this phrase means that the parties have agreed that the subordination of the ellees' fee interest will be without restrictions (Frief for ellant p.13).

This argument is invalid for two reasons: First,

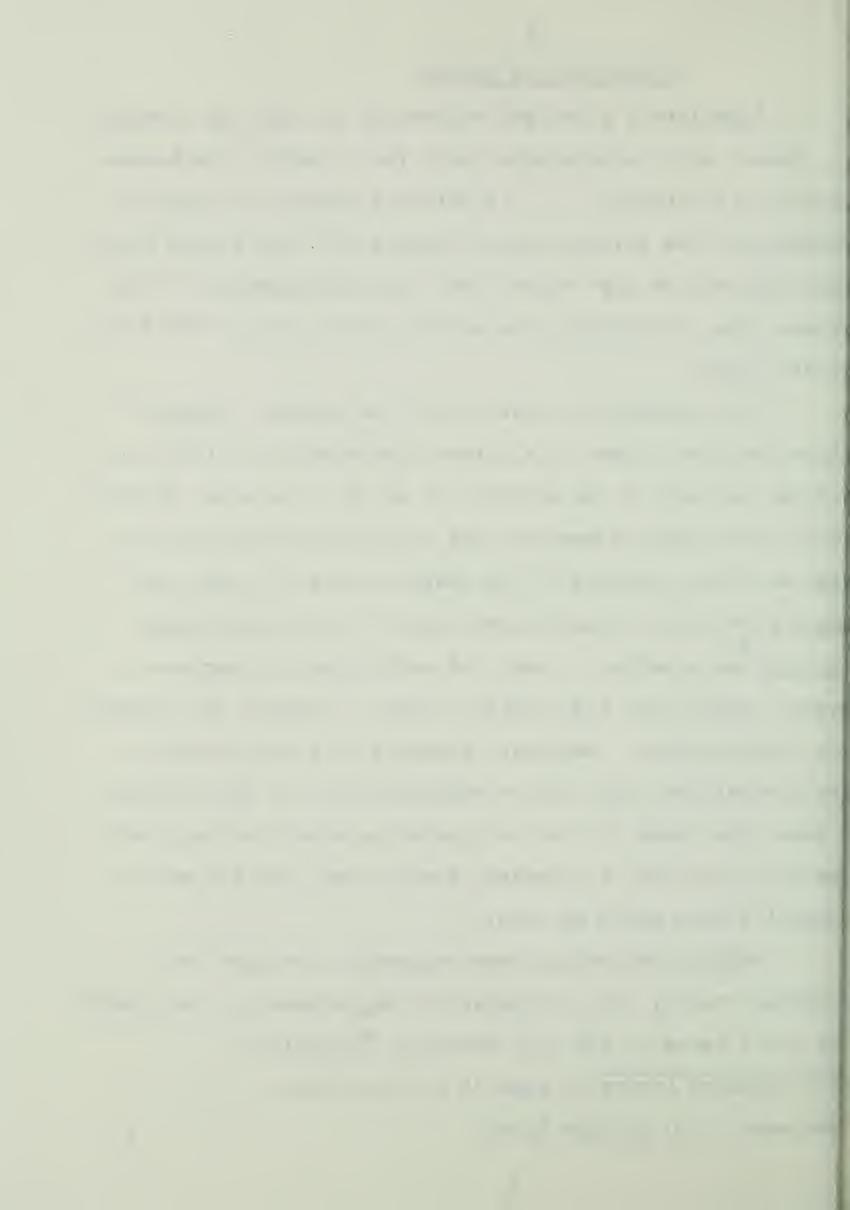
Appellant has lifted this phrase completely out of the control from the rest of the sentence in which it is used, thereby torting the obvious meaning that a provision subordinating fee would be included in the lease along with other non-indard provisions not mentioned and yet to be negotiated,

2/
Second, as a matter of law, the subordination language is vague, indefinite, and uncertain that it renders the alleged non unenforceable. Necessary elements of a subordination use are omitted, such as the maximum amount of the construction loan, the terms of the loan including when the loan would me due, the rate of interest it would bear and the manner which the loan would be paid.

Before discussing these arguments, the Appellees I review briefly the principles of law necessarily considered the court below in its oral decision (R:105-107).

This argument begins on page 15 of this Brief.

See pages 17-31 of this Brief.



A. Statute of Frauds

If an option to lease is so indefinite and unread in its essential and material terms because future gotiations are contemplated between the parties, then der the Hawaii Statute of Frauds neither an action for ecific performance nor an action for damages can be intained. It is a basic requirement of this Statute that e agreement must be sufficient, that is, the agreement st contain all the essential and material terms of the reement.

The court below by deciding that the subordination nguage was vague and indefinite and could not be walved one party because it was an essential and material term the alleged option, concluded that as a matter of law e alleged option was insufficient under the Statute of Frauds.

49 Am.Jur. Statute of Frauds § 353 (1943), states e applicable principle:

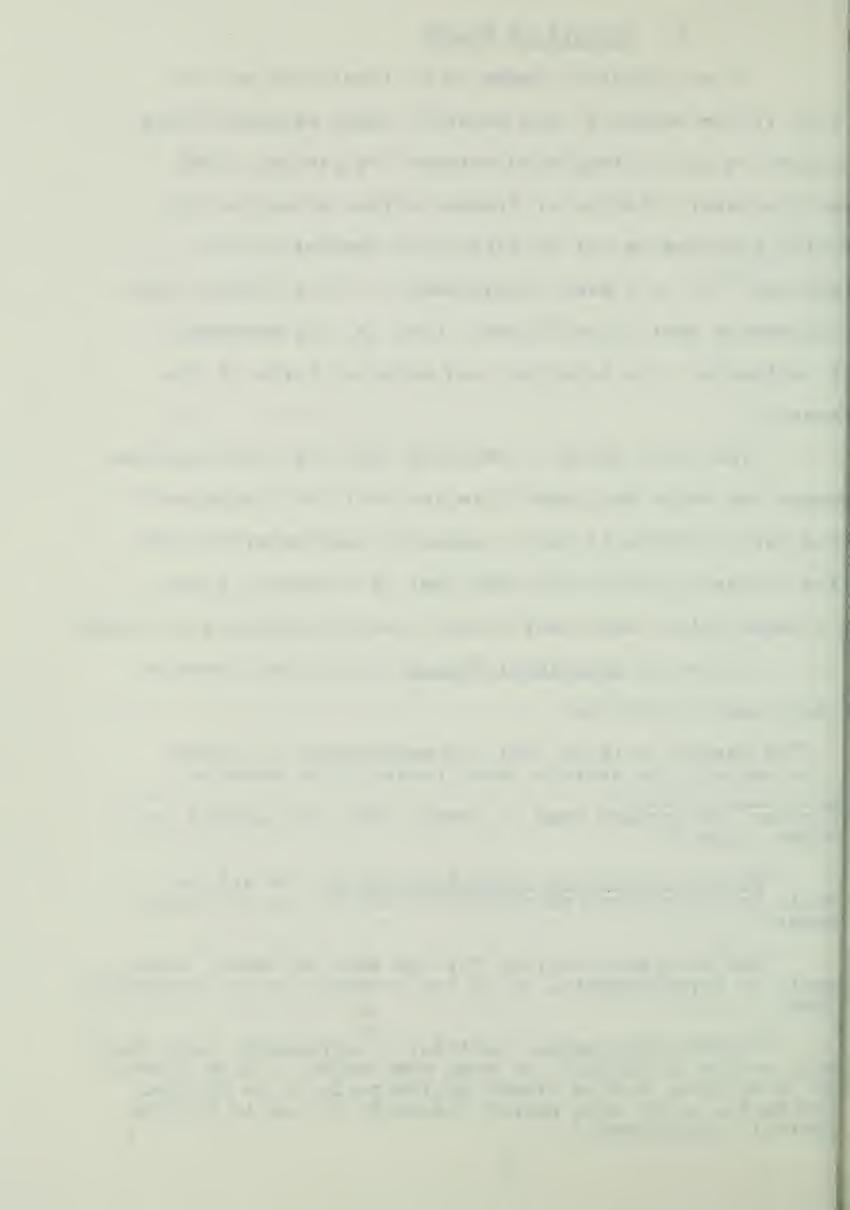
"The general rule is that the memorandum, in order to satisfy the statute, must contain the essential

Chapter 190 Revised Laws of Hawaii 1955, as amended, provides in part:

"Certain contracts, when actionable. No action shall be brought and maintained in any of the following cases: . . .

"(d) Upon any contract for the sale of lands, tenements or hereditaments, or of any interest in or concerning them; . . .

"Unless the promise, contract or agreement, upon which such action is brought, or some memorandum or note thereif, is in writing, and is signed by the party to be charged therewith, or by some person thereunt by him in writing lawfully authorized."



terms of the contract, expressed with such certainty that they may be understood from the memorandum itself or some other writing to which it refers or with which it is connected, without resorting to parol evidence."

The annotator in Annot., 16 A.L.R.2d 621 (1951), titled "Sufficiency of memorandum of lease agreement to tisfy the Statute of Frauds, as regards terms and condions of lease" summarizes the general rule by stating:

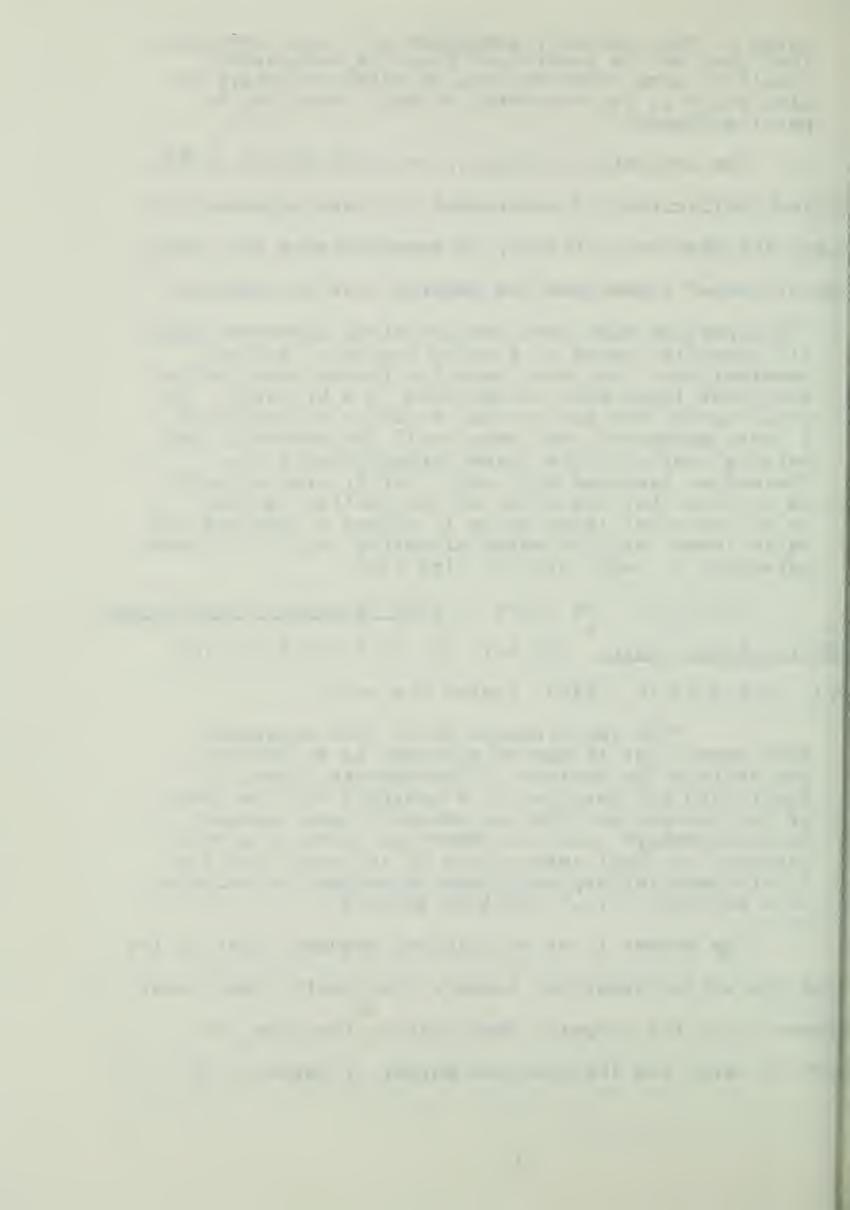
"'The parties must have reached final agreement upon all essential terms of a valid contract, without reservation of any such term for future negotiation, and those terms must be embodied in a writing.' In other words, the memorandum relied on to establish a lease agreement must embody all the essential and material parts of the lease contemplated to be thereafter executed with such clarity and certainty as to show that the minds of the parties had met on all material terms so as to effect a complete and valid lease, with no material matter left for future agreement or negotiation." (at 624)

Similarly, the court in <u>ll30 President Street Corp.</u>

Bolton Realty Corp., 300 N.Y. 63, 90 N.Y.S.2d 50 (Ct.
p.), 38 N.E.2d 16 (1949), states the rule:

"The requirements which this agreement must meet--that it may be enforced as a contract and satisfy the Statute of Frauds--are clear in theory and not peculiar to a contract for the lease of real property. The parties must have reached final agreement upon all essential terms of a valid contract, without reservation of any such term for future negotiation, and those terms must be embodied in a writing. . . " (38 N.E. 2d at 18)

The answer to an anticipated argument that by the e of the words "essential terms", the courts simply mean reement upon the property description, the term, the ount of rent, and the time and manner of payment, is



e following comment by the same annotator in Annot., A.L.R.2d, at 624:

"And it should be particularly noted that although a memorandum may satisfy the statute by setting out with sufficient clarity all essential terms of a valid lease, if it goes further and shows that some other term or condition material to the lease, though not essential to a valid lease, has not been fully agreed upon by the parties but has been left for further negotiation or agreement, such additional matter may thereby render the memorandum insufficient under the statute."

e Hawaii Supreme Court in Francone v. McClay, 41 Haw. 72, -79 (1955), has recognized and adopted this view:

"Many authorities hold that there need be only a definite agreement as to the name of the parties to the lease, the extent and bounds of the property leased, a definite and agreed term, a definite and agreed price or rental, and the time and manner of payment. Where there are these essentials and no expectation of further provisions to be negotiated later, such a contract to lease is sufficiently definite for enforcement by a decree of a court of equity. . .

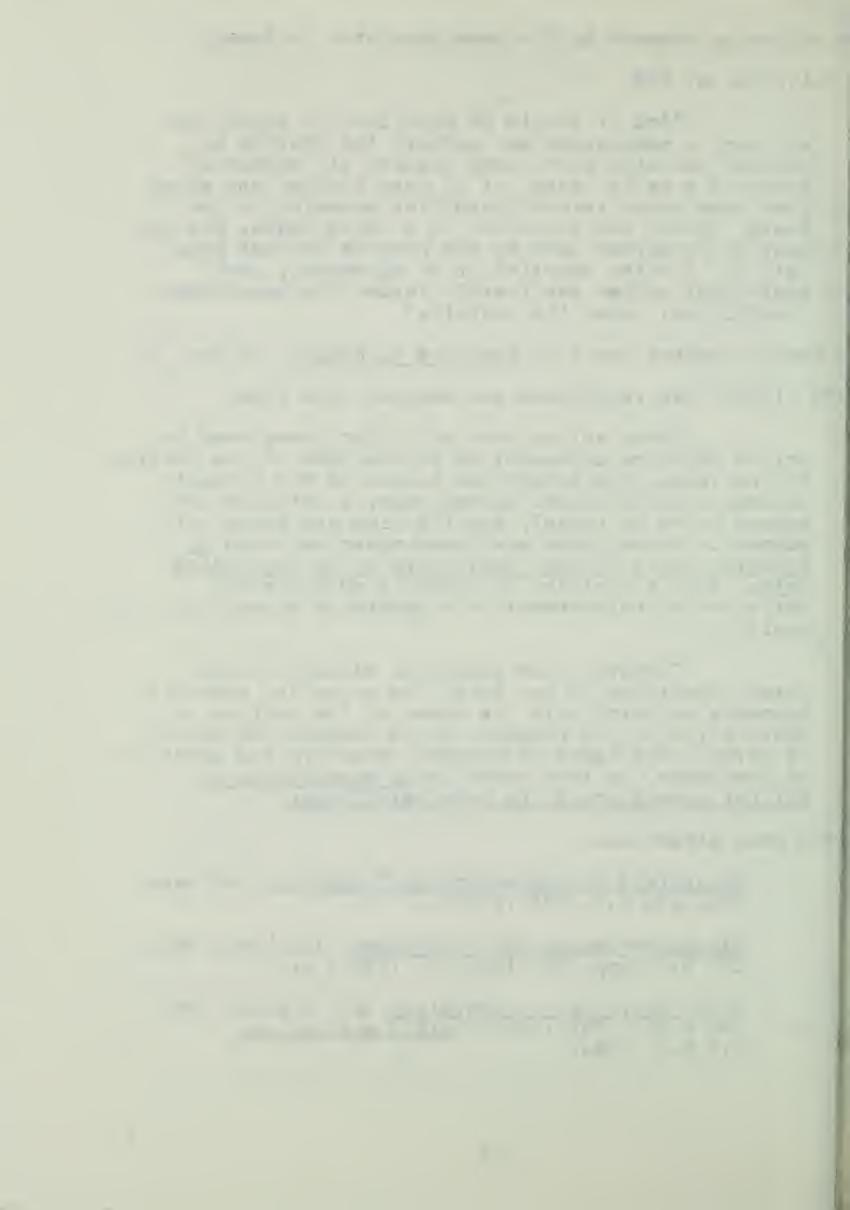
"However, the important element in the cases purporting to set forth the so-called essential elements as being only the names of the parties, a description of the property to be leased, the amount of rental, the terms of payment, the term and duration of the lease, is that there is no expectation of further provisions to be negotiated later."

the same effect see:

Rosenfield v. United States Trust Co., 290 Mass. 210, 195 N.E. 323 (1935);

Blackmore-Danzia Co. v. Silsbee, 131 Misc. 340, 225 N.Y.Supp. 767 (Sup.Ct. 1927); and

H. M. Weill Co. v. Creveling, 181 App.Div. 282,
168 N.Y.S. 385 (1917), aff'd without op.
119 N.E. 1048.



B. An option to lease which is incomplete and uncertain cannot be specifically performed.

It is without dispute (1 Williston, Contracts § 37, . 107-111 (1957 ed.) that there cannot be an "offer" in e legal sense without sufficient definiteness thereof, so at upon acceptance a court is able to give the offer an act meaning. Since by definition an option is merely an fer, an option cannot be accepted unless it contains "all e terms necessary for the required definiteness." (See merous cases cited by Williston loc. cit.)

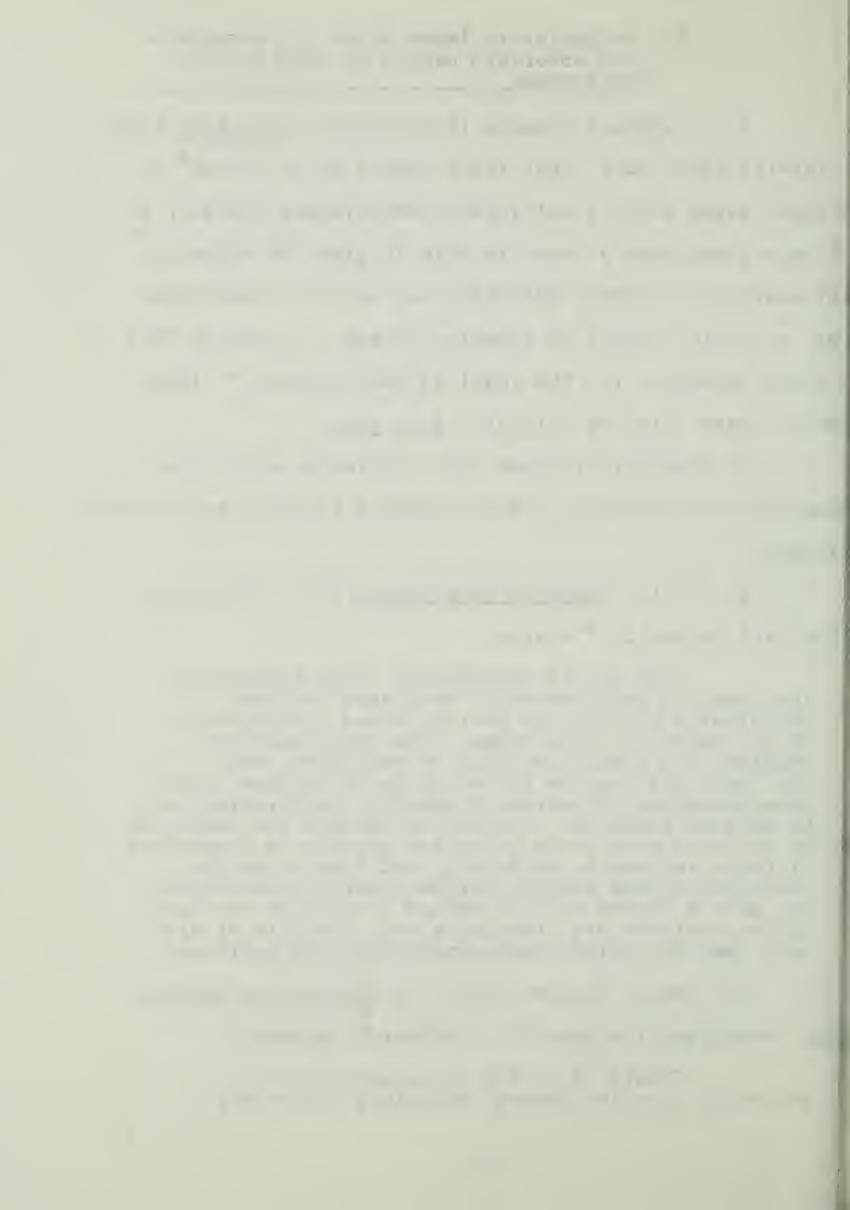
It therefore follows that contracts, which are complete and uncertain, are not capable of being specifically rformed.

25 R.C.L., Specific Performance § 17, "Certainty Contract Generally," states:

"One of the fundamental rules respecting the specific performance of contracts is that performance will not be decreed where the contract is not certain in its terms. The terms must be complete and free from doubt or ambiguity, and must make the precise act which is to be done clearly ascertainable. A decree of specific performance may be entered where the contract is certain and complete, or contains provisions which are capable in themselves of being reduced to certainty, and from which the intention of the parties can be clearly ascertained, but such a decree will be denied if some of the terms of the contract are indefinite and uncertain or are left open for future determination by the parties."

The Hawaii Supreme Court, in Francone v. McClay, pra, recognized the general rule when it stated:

"There is little or no conflict of authority upon the general principle that where



a contract is complete and certain as to the essential and material terms, parts and elements of a lease, specific performance will be granted; nor if the contract to lease or the negotiations of the parties affirmatively disclose or indicate that <u>further</u> negotiations, terms and conditions are contemplated, the proposed lease is considered incomplete and incapable of being specifically enforced." (41 Haw. at 78)

Similarly, in Mercer v. Payne & Sons Co., 115 b. 420, 213 N.W. 813, 818 (1927), the court stated:

"The rule appears to be, as deduced from the authorities, that a court of equity will not enforce a contract, unless it is complete and certain in all its essential elements, and the parties themselves must agree upon the material and necessary details of the bargain, and if any of these be omitted, or left obscure or indefinite, so as to leave the intention of the parties uncertain respecting the substantial terms, the case is not one for specific performance. It is not the function of a court of equity to make a contract for the parties, or to supply any of the material stipulations thereof. If any of the essential details are wanting a chancellor will not supply them in a decree for specific performance. . . "

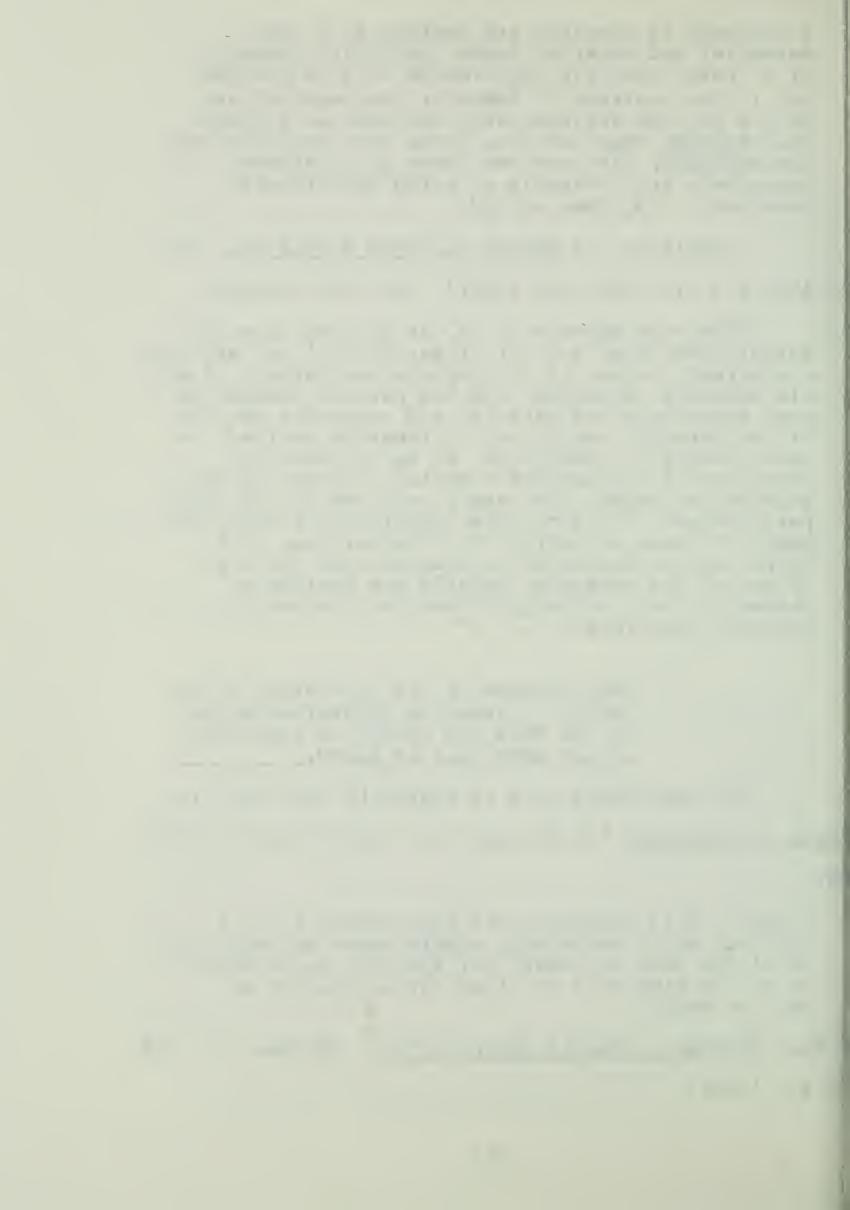
> Definiteness of the provisions of an option to lease is determined either on the date the option is exercised or the date suit is filed.

The applicable rule is stated by the court in eving v. Vandover, 240 Mo. App. 117, 218 S.W. 2d 175, 179

"'Equity will determine the enforceability of a contract as to certainty, completeness and mutuality as of the date of demand for specific performance or at the time suit is filed rather than at an earlier date.""

949):

e also <u>Heidner v. Hewitt Chevrolet Co.</u>, 166 Kan. 11, 199 2d 481 (1948).

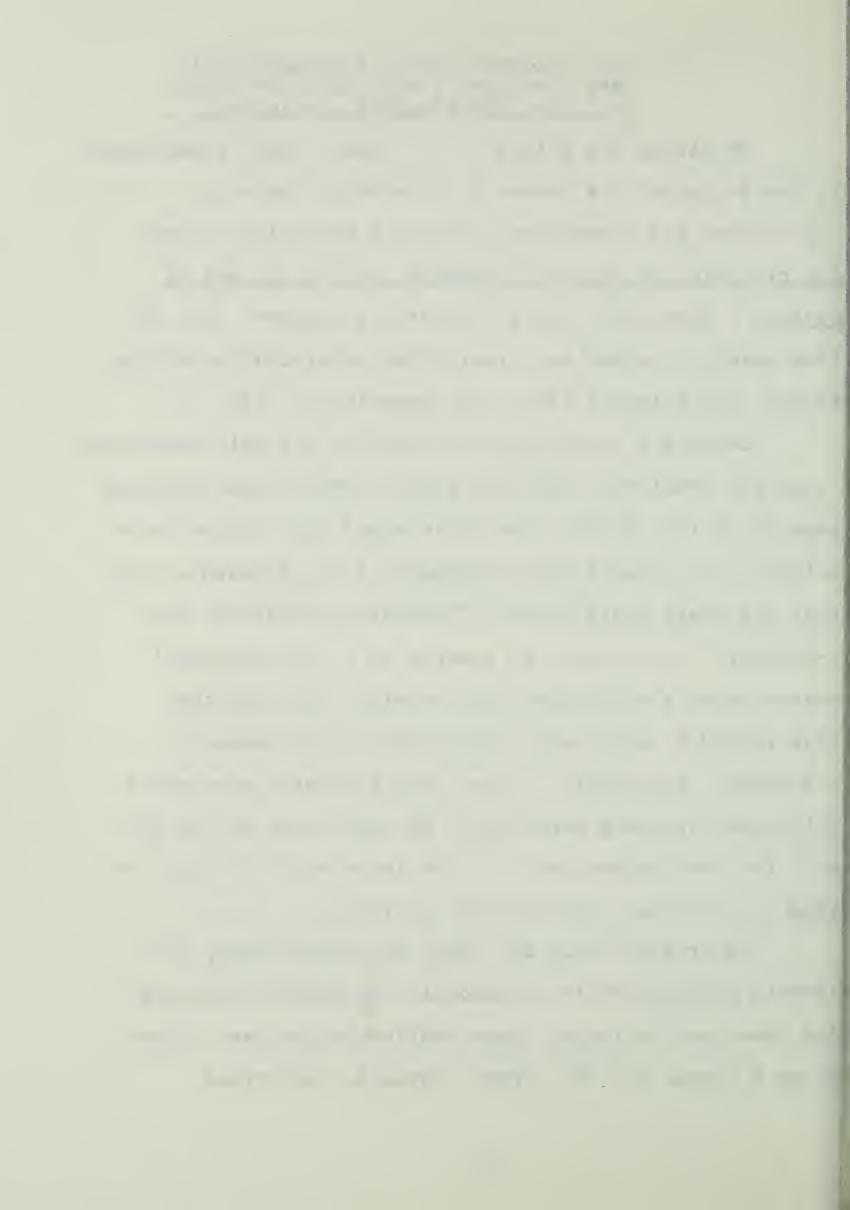


. The proposed leasing agreement would have contained a sub-rdination clause and other non-standard provisions.

By taking the phrase ". . . Lessor shall subindinate eir fee to permit the Lessee to obtaining financing . . ." to of context and thereby excluding the modifying phrase ich provision is by way of example, but not by way of extension", Appellant offers the tenuous argument that the cities merely intended an unrestricted subordination of the pellees' fee interest (Brief for Appellant p. 13).

Because a subordination clause is not self-executing trequires creativity (see the subordination cases starting page 20 of this Brief), the obvious and only logical concuction to be given to this language of the alleged option that the lease would contain "standard provisions" and on-standard' provisions, an example of a 'non-standard' ovision being a subordination provision. Nor did the cities intend to place any limitations on the number of on-standard provisions. Other 'non-standard' provisions re intended and were expected to be negotiated during the fee of the "exclusive option". The lease would just not be needed to a single 'non-standard' provision.

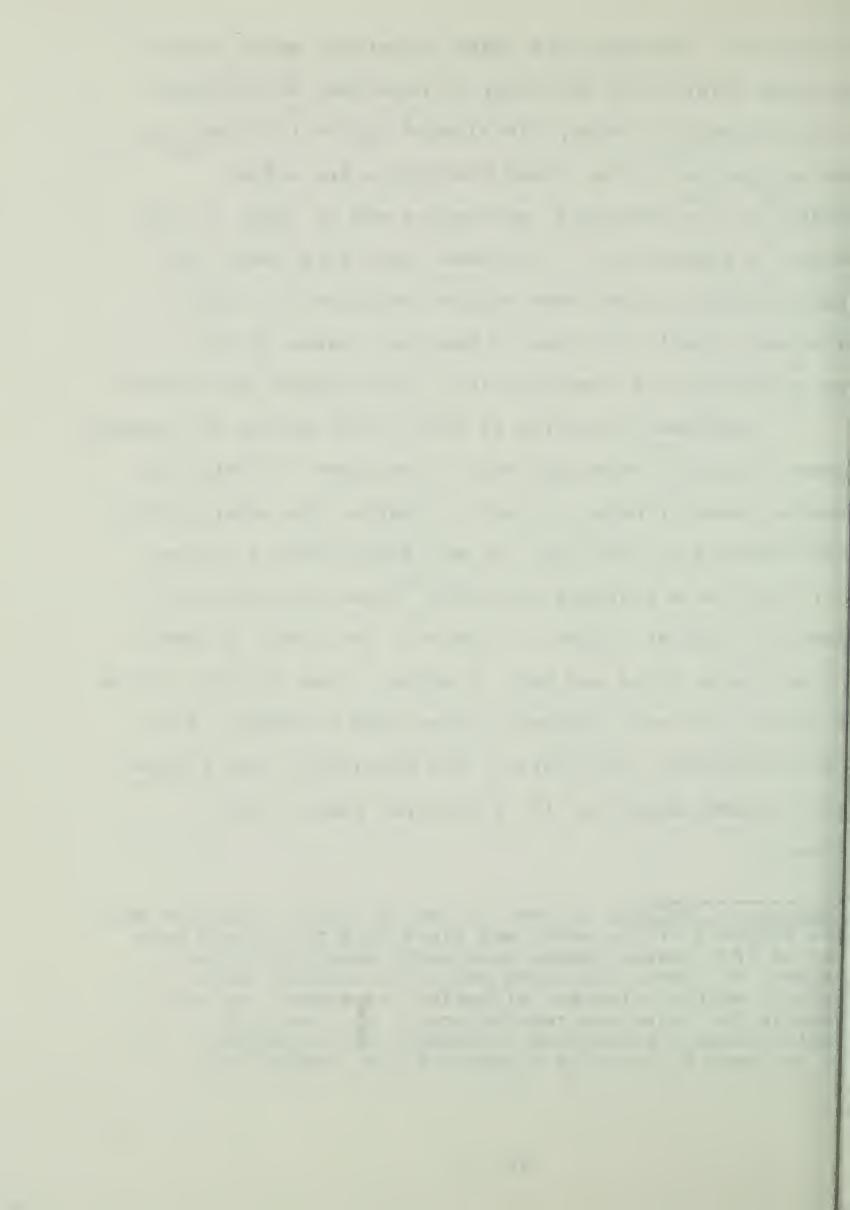
On or about July 25, 965, Mr. Frank Nunes, the lifornia attorney while in Honolulu, personally delivered the Appellees' attorney lease drafted by the law offices Nunes & Crews, 967 "B" Street, Hayward, California



:13,36,85). Although this lease contained, among others, ovisions relating to an option to purchase, an extension d an arbitration clause, the alleged option is slient on ese provisions. Thus, these provisions are either 1/2 and and or 'non-standard' provisions and in light of the pellant's admissions in its Answer that this lease connect provisions which were neither standard nor usual ovisions normally included in Hawaiian leases (R:45), ese provisions are obviously the 'non-standard' provisions.

Appellees' position is that on the motion for summary doment the court below had only to consider if there was genuine issue of material fact on whether the subordination ause tendered by Appellant (or any subordination clause) s or could be a standard provision "normally contained in lease for similar property situate in the State of Hawaii". e court below could and did, in effect, take judicial notice at there is no such standard clause used in Hawaii (R:106) d the syntactical structure of the Appellant's own alleged tion document supports, if it does not require this inclusion.

Francone v. McClay, 41 Haw. 72, at 82 (1955), suggests what are standard or the usual and stereotype provisions contained in a lease, naming provisions relating to the payment of taxes, insurance and other charges, etc., repair, maintain fences, sidewalks, sewerage, drains, observe the rules and regulations of the board of health, keep the premises in repair, not to assign or mortgage without the consent of the lessors, etc.



anticipated future negotiations between the parties on the landard provisions. This being so, the alleged ion cannot as a matter of law be the basis for a claim, ce the court has nothing before it which in any manner embles a completed agreement. Since the alleged option exed without the parties reaching an agreement on a lease, court below quite properly rejected the task of creating movo a leasing agreement for the parties (R:114-118).

The alleged option on its face not only required

E. As a matter of law, a subordination provision requires agreement on the conditions of the subordination.

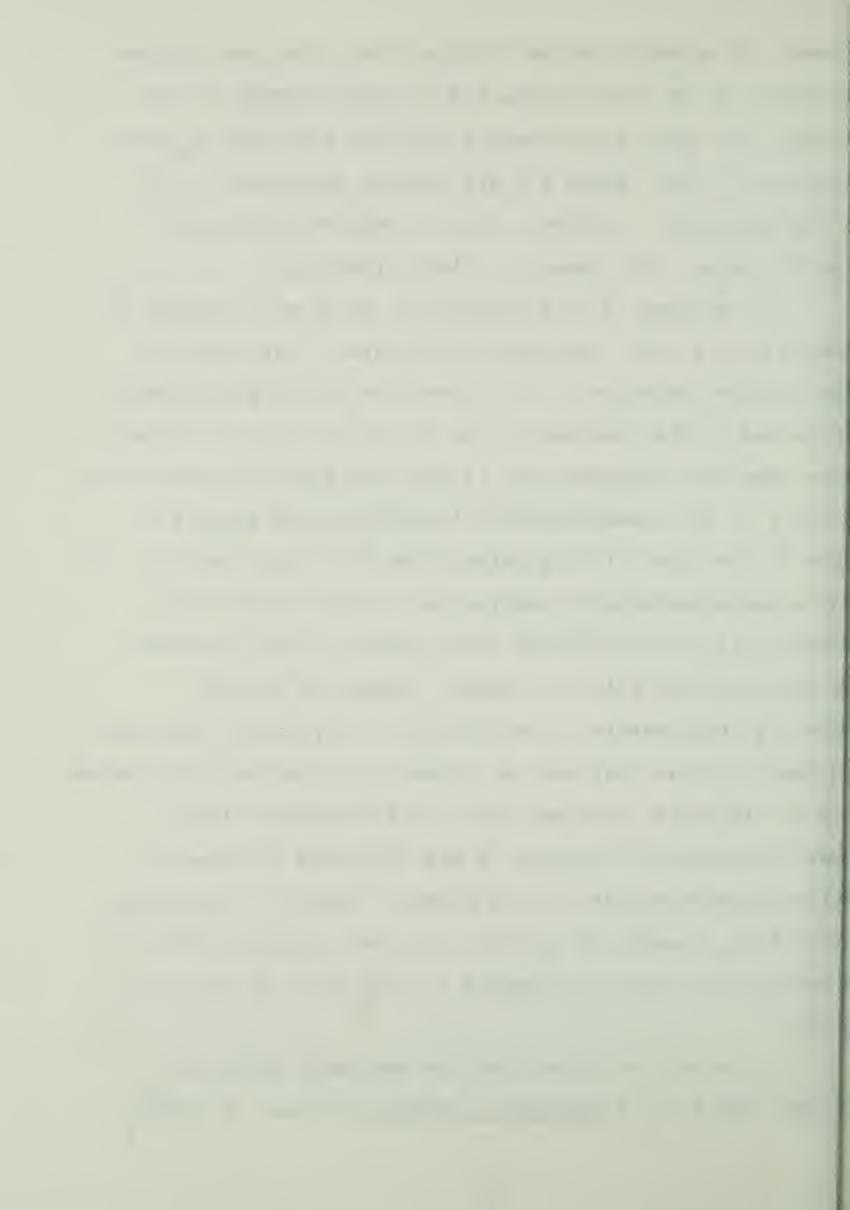
Appellant irrelevantly argues that the court below has ed in entering judgment because the subordination clause tracted for is "clear, definite and unequivocal" and that clause contracted for is "wholly without restrictions" lef for Appellant p. 13). In effect, the Appellant is using that the language of the option resulted in a conctual obligation on the part of the Appellees-lessors to ow a lien to be imposed on their fee simple title (1) for an efinite amount, (2) at an indefinite interest rate, (3) able over an indefinite period, (4) for indefinite financing

For cases showing that the tender of the lease in connection with an uncertain option is indicative of the necessity for additional negotiation as to material terms, see: Goldstine v. Tolman, 157 Wis. 141; 147 N.W. 7 (1914); McKnight v. Broadway Inv. Co., 147 Ky. 535, 145 J.W. 377 (1912), and Rosenfield v. United States Trust Company, 290 Mass. 21, 195 N.E. 323 (1935).

- 111 - 11 structure to be constructed, and (6) the proceeds of the ancing from which subordination would be available without trictions to the lessee for any purpose whatsnever. All s the Appellant, in effect, says is embraced within the ase "to permit the lessee to obtain financing".

To succeed in this contention, which would appear to absurd on its face, Appellant would have to overcome two irmountable obstacles: (1) Prove that this absurd meaning intended by the language of the option [to do this counsel the Appellant suggests that in some vague way by stating "in n court on two occasions that it would provide experts to tify at the trial of this matter that the clause had a inite and ascertainable meaning as it stood" (Brief for ellant p.13), this amounted to an offer of proof of facts ch precludes the entry of summary judgment], and (2) isfy the requirements of certainty of a contract. Appellant ld have to prove that such a clause to be drafted and inserted the 56 1/2 years lease was one of the "standard" lease uses contracted for because it was contained in leases of milar property situate in the State of Hawaii". No denume ue of fact is made out by this contention, and no trails ared by the rules of procedure to dispose of so tenuous a ition.

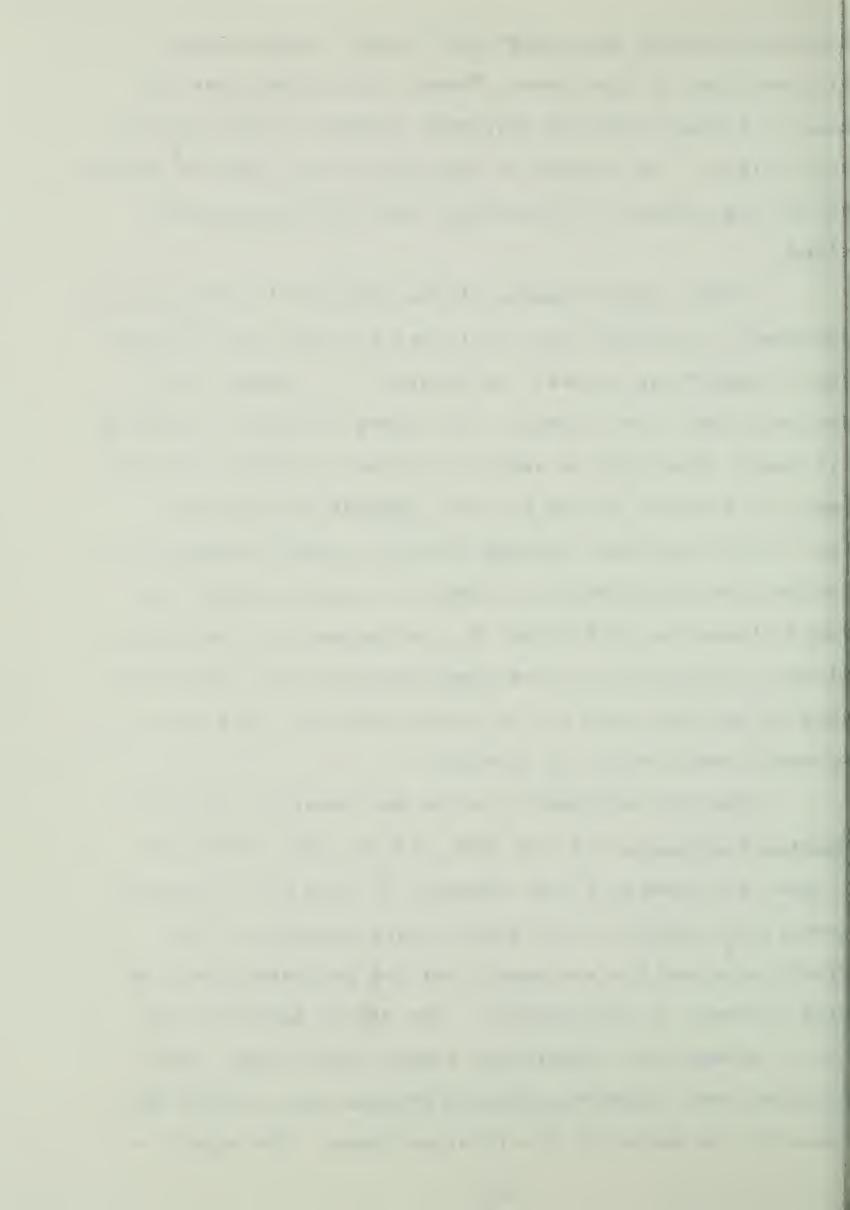
It should be noted that the testimony which the ellant refers to in <u>Francone v. McClay</u>, 41 Haw. 72 (1955),



testimony merely as to what are "usual" clauses specially enforced in that case. There, the contract was for ease of income producing apartment property, with improvets in place. The concept of subordination of the fee simple le for the purpose of "financing" was not in any manner olved.

If the vague language of the Appellant's Brief (p.13) intended to convince this court that an expert will be perted to testify as to what the phrase ". . . Lessor shall ordinate their fee to permit the lessee to obtain financing ." means, Appellant is asking an expert to substitute his gment on a matter of law for the judgment of the court ow. If the Appellant intends to put on expert testimony to we that the subordination clause in a lease contract is a indard clause [no such offer of proof appears on the record], ellant is offering to prove something which the court below icially noticed could not be proven and which this court in present record will not disturb.

Appellant mistakenly relies as "squarely in point" McCarty v. Harris, 216 Ala. 265, 113 So. 233 (1927). In t case, purchasers of real property filed a bill in equity require the sellers to sell and convey property. The tract contained the statement that the purchasers may put irst mortgage on the property. The seller appealed the ial of a demurrer, contending, among other things, that contract was rendered uncertain because the contract did specify the amount of the first mortgage. The court



sposed of this by holding that that provision was not e essence of the contract to convey ". . . a mere subsidiar" it of the agreement" (113 So. at 234). In the present case, the urt below held, in effect, that the subordination of e fee in a leasing transaction involving Lahaina, Maurach property was extremely essential and necessary for e proper financing for the hotel-apartment project as well protection for the value of the reversionary interest of e Appellees, their heirs or assigns (R:105-106, and see p.Low p.9,12).

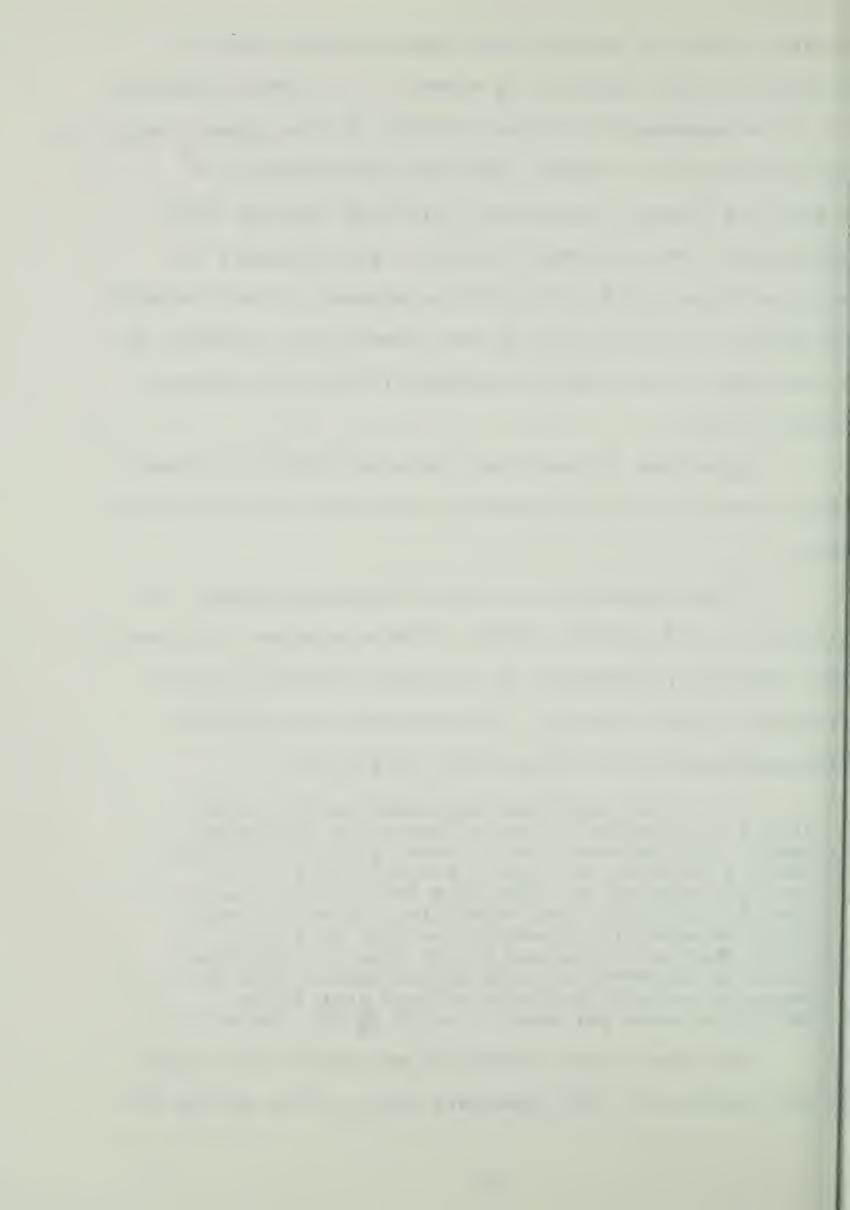
Appellees contend that the subordination language the alleged option is uncertain and indefinite as a matter law.

A case squarely on point is <u>Gould v. Callan</u>, 127

1.App.2d 1, 273 P.2d 93 (1954). There, a buyer of property ught specific performance of a written contract for the nveyance of real property. The contract contained the llowing subordination clause (273 P.2d at 94):

"The 2nd Trust Deed mentioned on page 1 hereof to provide for subordination on following basis: In the event the trustor [plaintiff] should erect a building on subject property at a total building cost of not less than \$75,000.00 or more than \$300,000.00, then Beneficiary agrees to subordinate said Trust Deed to the lien of a first trust deed not to exceed 60% of the true building cost. In the event of such subordination then the payments on said Second Trust Deed loan to be \$400.00 or more per month, including 5% interest."

The lower court found that provision to be uncer-



eneral rules relating to definiteness, stated:

"The subordination provision is incomplete in its statement of the obligation to be secured by the first deed of trust. It is silent as to the amount of interest, the length of time it is to run, and the terms of payment. Gardner, a realtor who represented defendant in the transaction, testifying in behalf of plaintiff, stated that at the time the escrow instructions were executed it was understood the subordination agreement would be prepared at a subsequent date by defendant's attorney and he was to approve its final form; the length of time the new first deed of trust would be on had not been previously discussed; the terms and conditions were to be prepared in a form which would be acceptable to and insurable by the Los Angeles Title & Trust Company.

"If something is reserved for the future agreement of both parties, the promise can give rise to no legal obligation until such future agreement. Since either party, by the very terms of the promise, may refuse to agree to anything to which the other party will agree, it is impossible for the law to affix any obligation to such a promise. . " (273 P.2d at 95)

The court concluded by stating:

"The failure of the subordination clause to state the amount of interest and the terms and conditions of payment of the obligation to be secured by the first deed of trust makes the contract uncertain and indefinite. The provisions are material and essential to a contract providing for a deed of trust as security for an obligation, and their absence is fatal to the claim for specific performance. The indefiniteness, uncertainty, and absence of all of the indicated material and substantial terms of the alleged contract justified the trial court in denying specific performance." (273 P.2d at 96)

The next case following Gould v. Callan was Roven
Miller, 168 Cal.App.2d 391, 335 P. 2d 1035 (1959). This
as also an action for specific performance of a contract for
ne sale of real property. The "Purchase Option Contract",
ong and detailed in many respects, was set forth in toto
n footnote 1 appearing on pages 1037 and 1038. That

rtion of this contract referring to a subord nation ause was (335 P.2d at 1038):

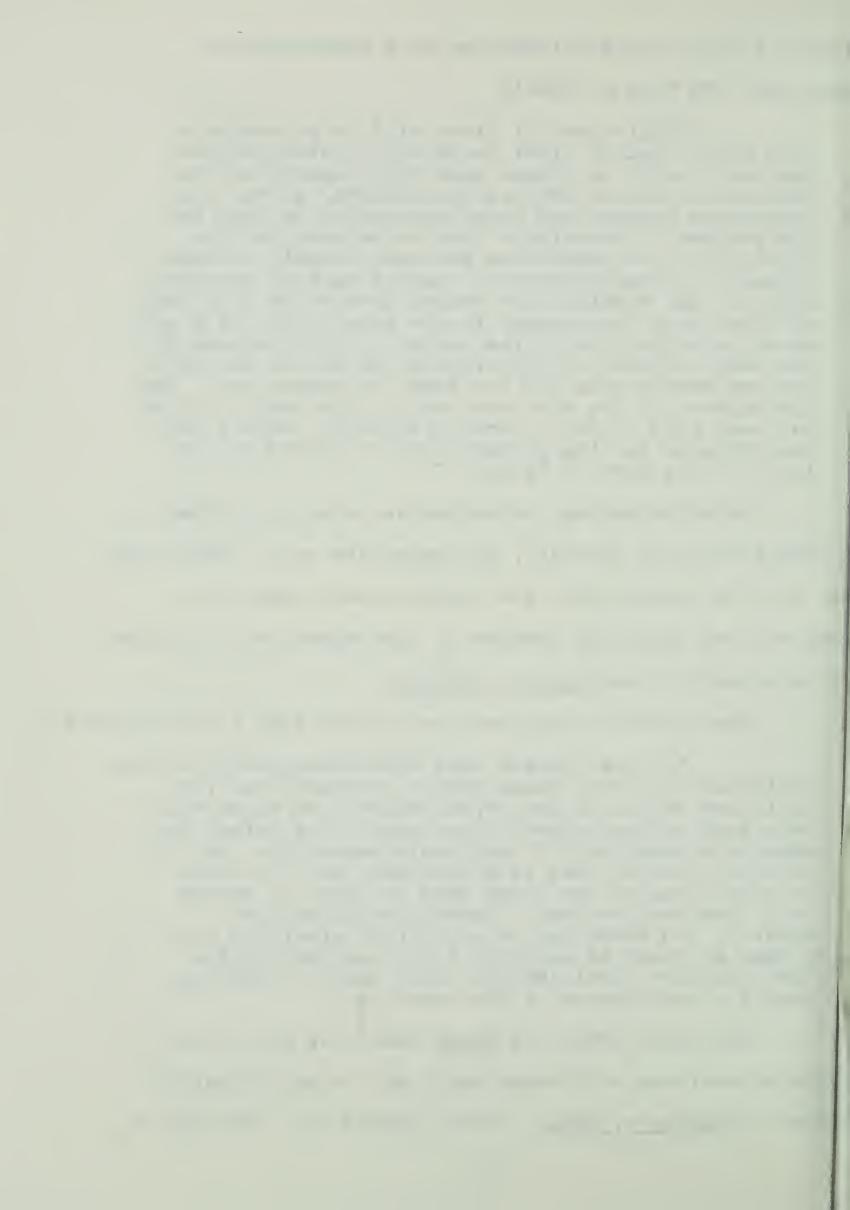
"'"This Deed of Trust will be subord nate to a First Deed of Trust to secure a construction loan which will be placed upon the property by the Trustor, or his successors and assigns, given to a recognized Savings and Loan Association or bank for the purpose of securing a loan to be used for the construction of residences and improvements in said property. Beneficiary will issue a partial reconveyance for any specific lot number covered by this Deed of Trust upon the payment to the beneficiary of a sum equal in proportion to the number of lots secured by the Deed of Trust to the original amount of the note secured hereby plus 20% for each lot reconveyed. When the balance of the note secured by this Deed of Trust has been paid in full, beneficiary will issue a full reconveyance for the property still covered by the lien of this Deed of Trust."'"

Notwithstanding the extensive details provided in me Purchase Option Contract, the appellate court upheld the ower court's finding that the contract was indefinite, accomplete and uncertain because of the subordination clause, slying primarily upon Gould v. Callan.

The court's holding was as follows (335 P.2d at 1040-41)

"In the instant case the subordination clause contained in the purchase option contract does not state the amount of the construction loan which would be placed on the property, nor any of its terms, nor when said construction loan would become due, nor the rate of interest that it would bear, nor the terms or conditions of the first deed of trust to secure said construction loan. These provisions are material and essential to a contract providing for a deed of trust as security for an obligation and their absence justified the trial court in denting specific performance of the contract."

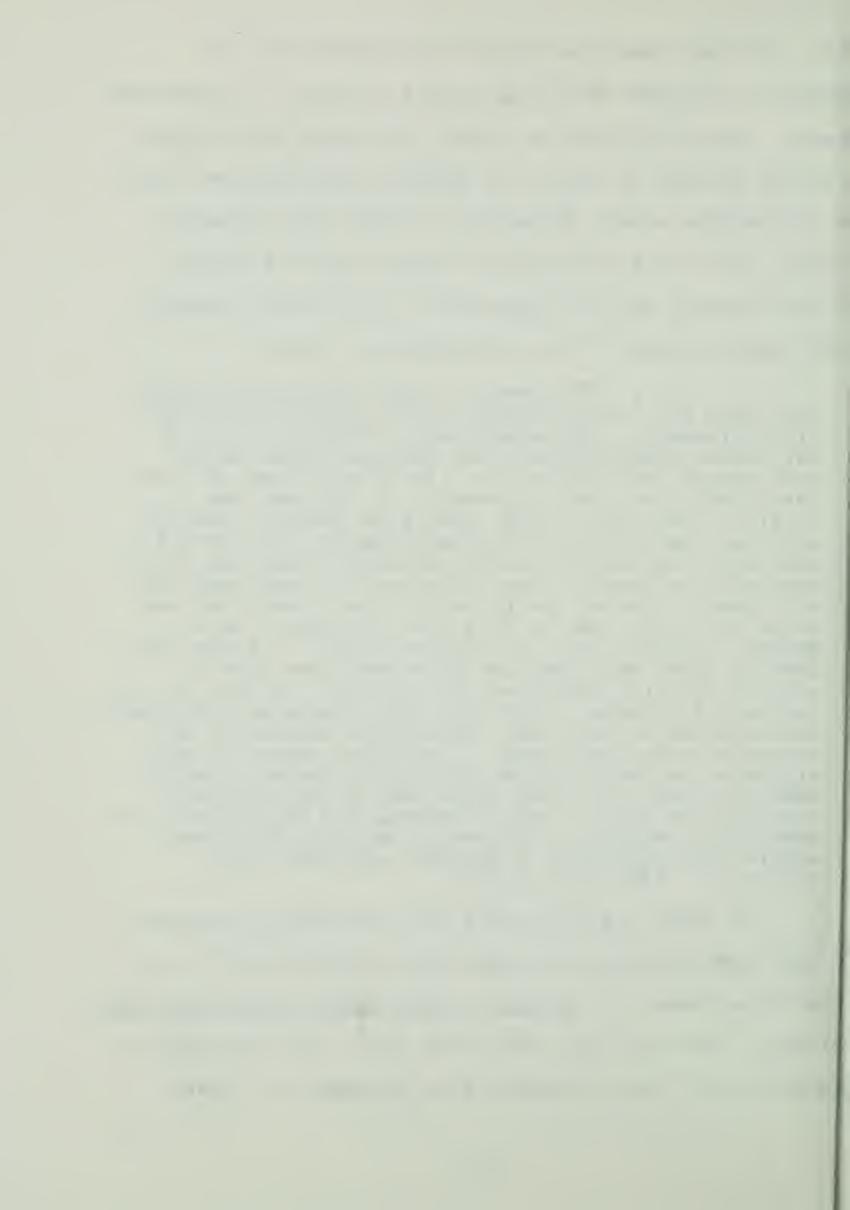
One month after the Roven case, the California pellate court was confronted again with a subordination oblem in Kessler v. Sapp, 169 Cal.App.2d 211, 338 P.2d 34



reement to purchase from the sellers a parcel of unimproved operty. Upon the latter's refusal to convey the property, e buyers brought an action for specific performance, whereon the sellers sought declaratory relief and a quieting title. The court affirmed the lower court's finding at the contract was too uncertain to be binding because the indefiniteness of the subordination clause:

"'. . . The Deed of Trust securing the above described Note shall contain the following Subordination Agreement: The Beneficiary on behalf of his or her heirs, administrators and assigns hereby agree and consent that during the life of said Deed of Trust the Trustors or their successors in interest may obtain a loan from a Bank, Insurance Company, Savings and Loan Association or Mortgage Company, securing a note for construction and/or permanent financing to be secured by a deed of trust which will be and remain at all times a lien on the property herein described and superior to the lien of this deed of trust. As a matter of record only, the Seller agrees to accept the Deed of Trust securing the above described Note on subject property described as individual parcels or lots instead of acreage if the buyer has completed subdivisua and obtained correct legl description describing the property by Lot and Tract. The Seller agrees to subordinate the Deed of Trust which will become a second deed of trust to a first trust deed to be filed concurrently or after close of escrow, and said first trust deed not to exceed in the amount equal to \$6.50 per square foot exclusive of garages, stairways and porches.'" (338 P.2d at 36)

In 1960, the California court was again concerned the the indefiniteness of a subordination provision in an tion to purchase. In Wright v. Fred Heyden Industries, Inc., Cal.Rptr. 392 (Cal.App. 1960), the court, in responding to e question of indefiniteness of an agreement to convey



sed for the first time on appeal, held the following subination provision to be indefinite (6 da . Fptr. at 393-

"'The trust deed hereinal eve provided for' the contract continued 'shall contain provisions permitting Buyer to subordinate and Owner agrees that the trust deed may, at the option of Buyer, be subordinated to loans for the purpose of improving the property covered by said deed of trust by the subdivision thereof and the construction on the lots produced as a result of such subdivision of houses and related improvements and shall further provide that upon the sale of each house and lot thus produced and improved, Owner will promptly, upon the request of Buyer, place in the escrow in which such house and lot is being sold by Buyer to a third person, a partial release of said deed of trust, which partial release shall remove from said house and lot the lien of such deed of trust, together with instructions to said escrow that such part al release may be delivered to the purchaser of such house and lot upon said escrow being able to deliver to Owner a sum equal to the full amount of the note of Buyer as hereinbefore described divided by the number of lots produced by the subdivision of the usable part thereof by Buyer."

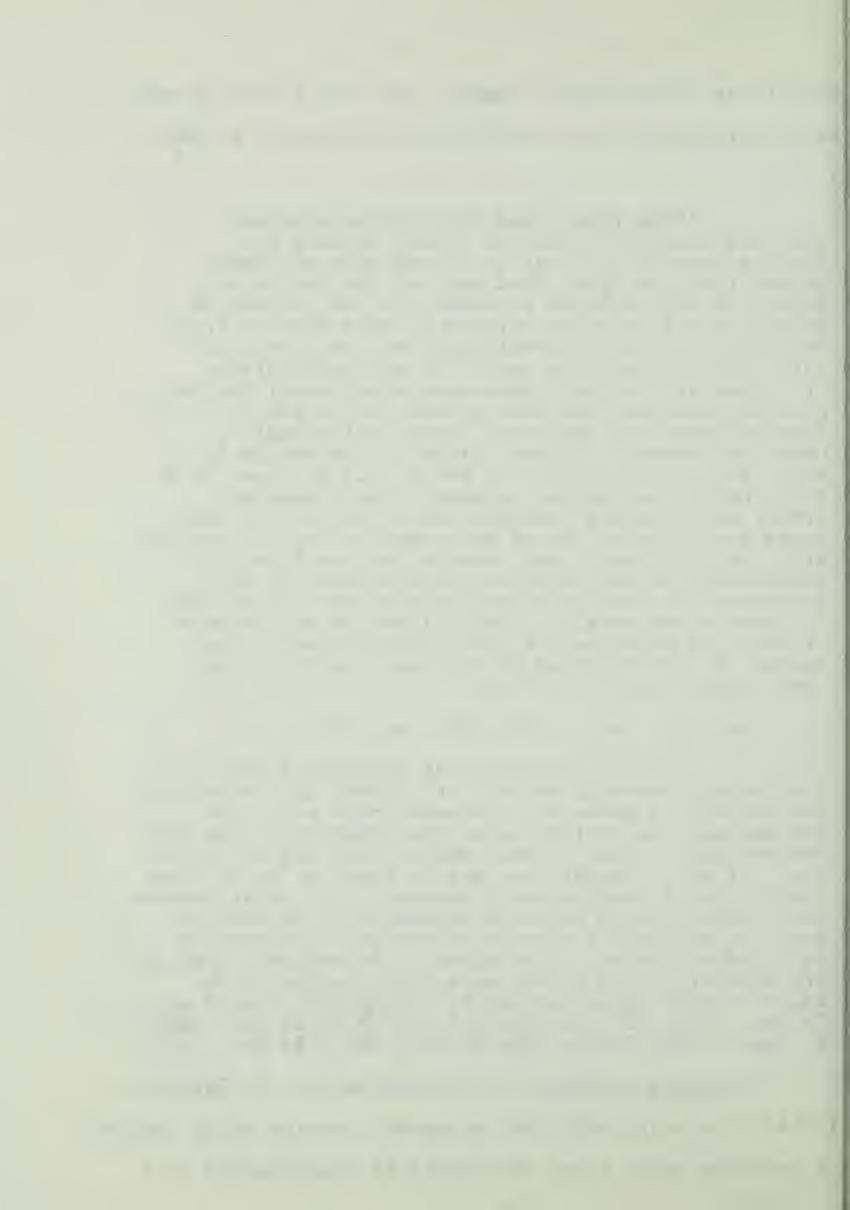
The court held (6 Cal. Rptr. at 394):

"It will be noted that nowhere in the provisions quoted--and, we add, in no part of the contract
not quoted--is there any statement made as to the
maximum amounts of the loans, the lengths of time they
may be made to run, in what manner they are to be paid,
what, if any, interest they are to bear, or as to other
conditions of importance in determining to what burdens
the property being sold and scheduled to be held in
trust to secure the buyer's obligation to the seller,
is to be subjected. Provisions of subordination str king similar to the above, were under review in two
fairly recent cases decided by this court: Could v.
Callan, 1954, 127 Cal.App.2d 1, 273 P.2d 93 and Kessler
v. Sapp, 1959, 169 Cal.App.2d 818, 338 P.2d 34. . . "

In <u>Conely v. Fate</u>, 227 Cal.App.2d 418, 38 Cal.pri.

3 (1964), the court held that a deposit receipt which implied at a purchase money trust deed would be sub-rdinated to a

. .



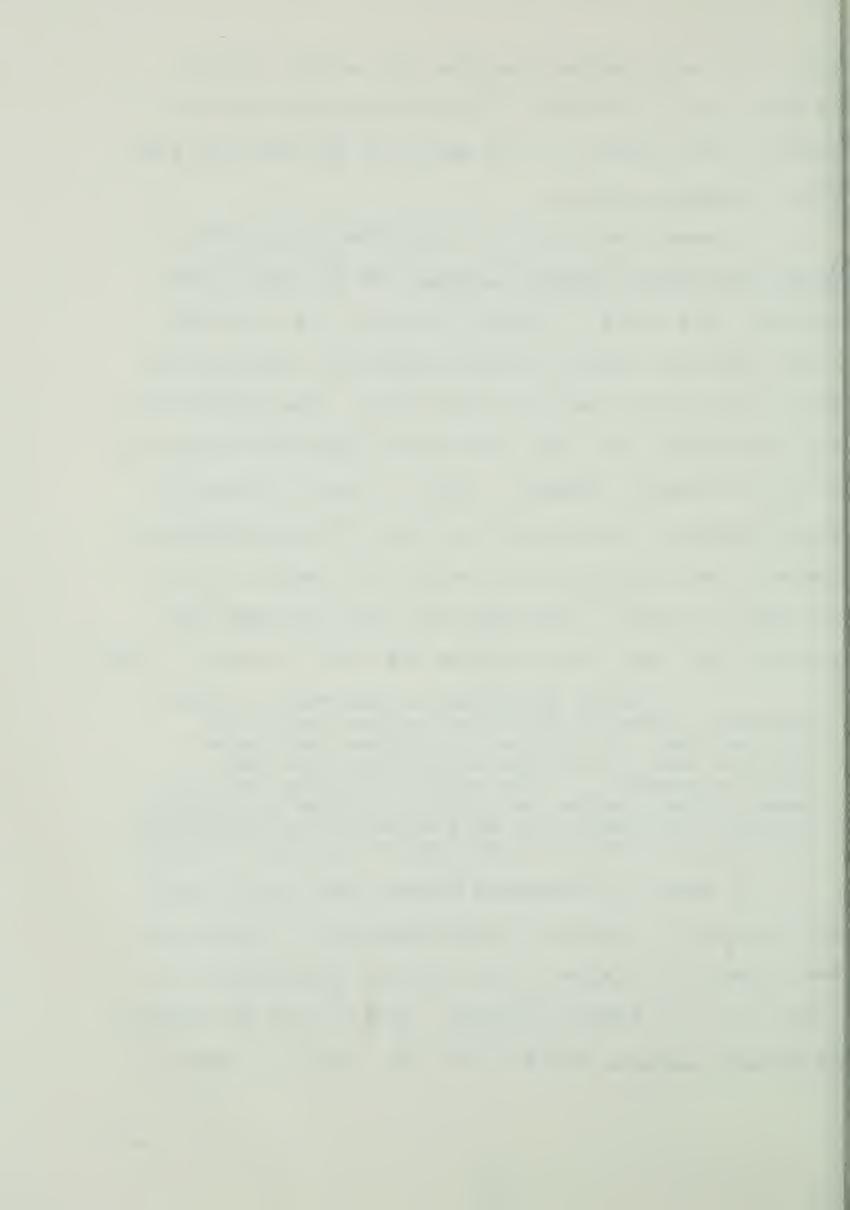
Ilding loan was uncertain because the receipt did not ate what type of structure or structures would be concucted on the property or the amount of the build na loan, ying on Gould v. Callan.

A recent decision on a subordination provision

Macha Development Company v. Reed, 228 Cal.App.2d 230, Cal.Rptr. 284 (1964). There, the court was involved the the identical question and procedure for raising that estion which confronted the court below. The question on beal was whether the lower court was justified in granting motion for summary judgment. This, in turn, raised the estion "whether a subordination clause in an agreement for e sale of real property is uncertain as a matter of law" Cal.Rptr. at 286). The appellate court affirmed the cision of the lower court stating that (39 Cal.Rptr. at 290):

"[W]hen something is reserved for future agreement [terms of the subordination clause] of both parties, the promise [to include the clause] can give rise to no legal obligation until such future agreement. 'Since either party, by the very terms of the promise, may refuse to agree to anything to which the other party will agree, it is impossible for the law to affix any obligation to such a promise.'"

It makes no difference whether the option refers the purchase or leasing of real property, or whether the ter is decided outside of the State of California. The York court, in <u>Kusky v. Berger</u>, 225 N.Y.S.2d 797 (1962), f'd without opinion, 249 N.Y.S.2d 858 (Sup.Ct., App.Div.

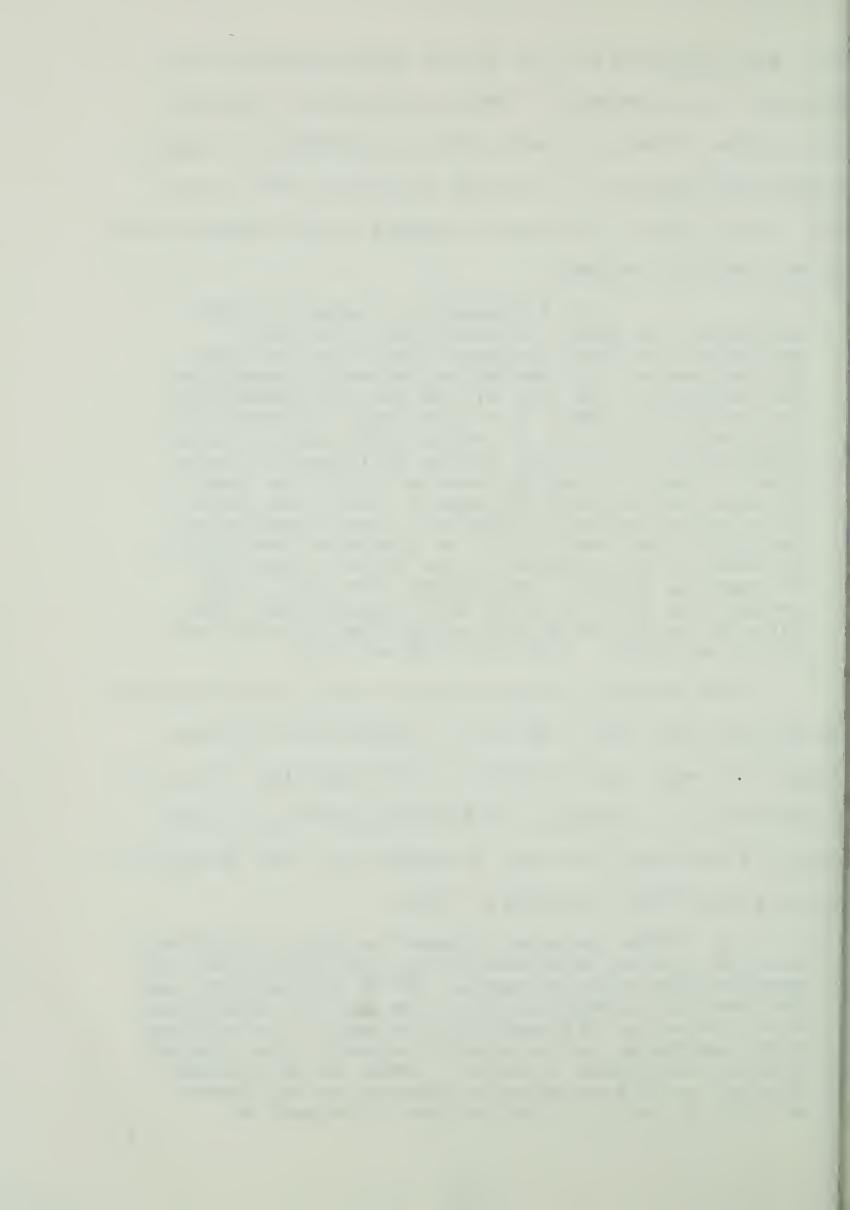


of an agreement to lease containing a subordinion clause. There, as here, was an agreement or option
lease real property. Although the court does not set
rth in its opinion the exact language of the subordination
ause, the court stated:

". . . It [agreement to lease] further obligates the Lessor to subordinate the said property to a first mortgage lien to be obtained by the Lessee in an amount not exceeding specified percentages of the cost of the building depending on the maturity date of the mortgage and sets forth elaborate provisions for refinancing and ultimate termination of all real estate mortgages not later than 14 years preceding termination of the lease. It requires that any mortgage to which the lease is to be subordinated be obtained 'from a banking or Savings & Loan Association or insurance institution licensed to do business in the State of New York.' It requires that all 'mortgages after the first refinancing must be fully self-liquidating', but makes no provision at all concerning interest rate of any mortgage." (225 N.Y.S.2d at 798)

The lessees brought an action for specific performce and were met with a motion to dismiss by the lesser
ising the legal insufficiency of the complaint. In grantg the motion to dismiss, the following portion of the
inion is pertinent, as well as support for the decision of
e court below (225 N.Y.S.2d at 799):

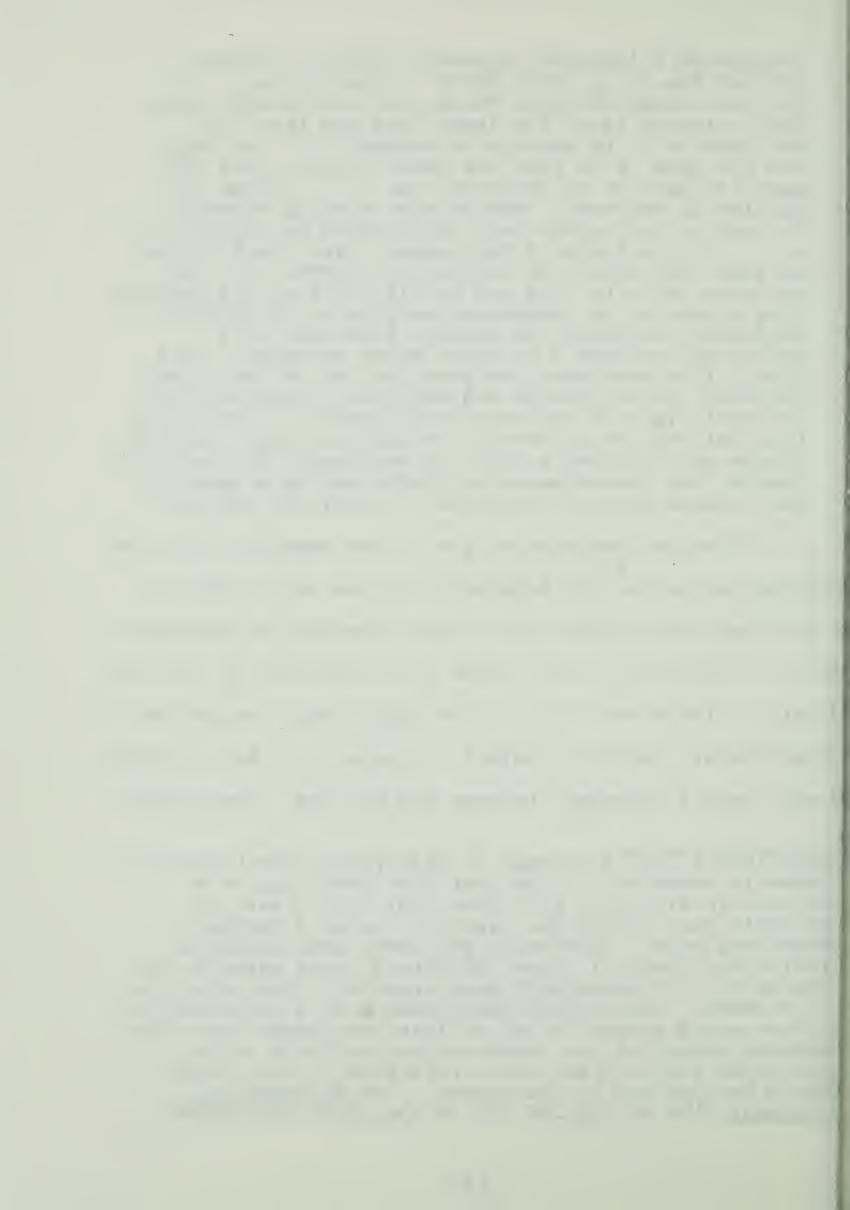
"The 'material element' omitted in Willmott was the interest and amortization to be provided in the purchase money mortgage. While no New York case has been found dealing with interest in a subordination clause, as distinct from interest in a purchase money mortgage, as the missing element, the interest rate of a mortgage to which a lease is to be subordinated would have material bearing on the lessee's ability to carry on his business, and must be



considered a 'material element,' Gould v. Callan, 127 Cal.App.2d 1, 273 P.2d 93. True, in the purchase money mortgage cases, the courts will imply that interest is at the legal rate and that the mortgage is to be payable on demand, . . . or that the mortgage is to have the same interest rate and maturity date as an existing one, . . . unless the parties by expressly leaving such missing elements to negotiation negate such implication or inference, . . . On the facts of the present case there can be no such implication or inference, however, for the mortgage is to be obtained by plaintiff or his assigns from a banking or insurance institution, a totally different situation, of course, from that of a seller taking back a purchase money mortgage. Were plaintiff's assignee a corporation, as is the normal practice in real estate transactions, there would be no legal limit on the rate of interest, . . . Having both omitted the interest rate from the subordination clause and included a right of assignment by plaintiff, the parties have created an hiatus making a specific performance decree impossible." [citations omitted]

The applicable principle of law emerging from the $\frac{1}{2}$ /
regoing decisions and adhered to by the court below in soral decision (R:105-107) is that whenever an agreement fers to subordination the terms and conditions of the subdination clause set forth in the option must be spelled out complete and extensive detail if there is to be a binding denforceable agreement between the parties. Accordingly,

Appellant's futile attempt to distinguish the California cases is based on a claim that the cases turn on a California statutory provision that a purchaser of property has no personal liability under a purchase money mortgage. This point has never been raised or relied on in any of these California cases even though the courts are repeatedly confronted with the subordination cases. The minimum requirements of a subordination clause would appear to be, at least, agreement upon the maximum amount of the construction loan both as to principal and interest and a reference to what terms would be required by the lender. See Stockwell v. Lindeman, 229 Cal.App.2d 750, 40 Cal.Rptr. 555 (1964).



the present action to be uncertain, vague, and indefinite, dithus incapable of being specifically enforced in the sister an action for damages.

Appellees offer the following cases to demonrate the rationale and reasonableness of the principle of
w recognized in the foregoing cases. The cases that the
pellees could offer in support of the rationale of the
al decision of the court below are almost numberless.

H. M. Weill Co. v. Creveling, 168 N.Y.S. 385

ap.Ct., App.Div. 1917) aff'd 119 N.E. 1048. The court

Id a memorandum vague which provided for rent at a given

Intal and then rent for "ll years at a reappraisal of 5 per

Int" on the grounds that the language underscored did not

Idicate what was to be reappraised. The court also held

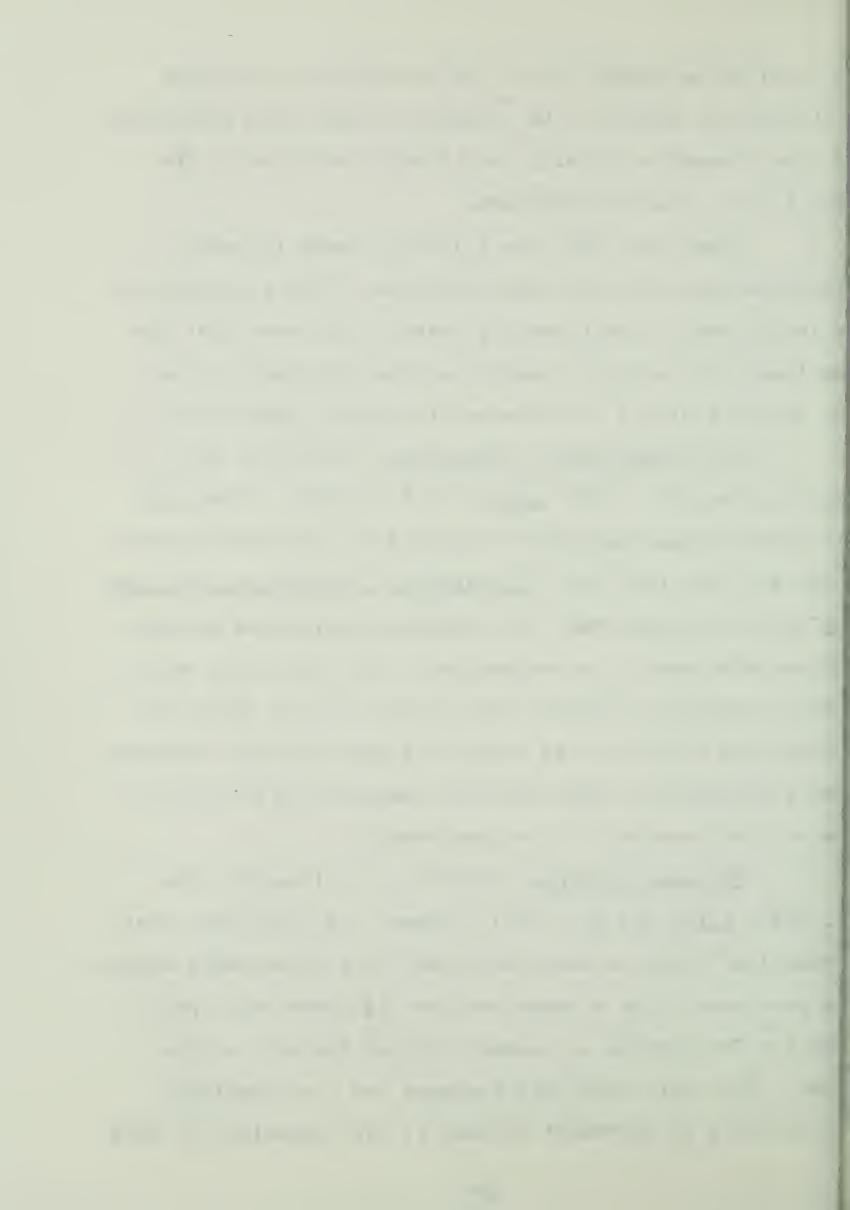
Ital language to improve the property to the extent of

less than \$10,000.00 as indefinite and uncertain because

ere was nothing to show when this expenditure would be

de or the character of the improvement.

Palombi v. Volpe, 226 N.Y.S. 135 (Sup.Ct., App. v. 1927, aff d 163 N.E. 607). There, the court held that essential term had been left open for further negotiations a provision in an alleged contract to lease which proded for "an opening or passway through the hall of the use." The court held this language was too indefinite constitute an agreement because it was impossible to tell



ere the opening was to be located.

Gordon v. Siegel, 125 N.Y.3.2d 862 (Sup.Ct.), dified on other grounds, 132 N.Y.S.2d 437 (1953). In that case a morandum of an agreement for the leasing of property ferred to the construction of a supermarket building. e court held this provision indefinite and indicating e necessity of further negotiations between the parties as the size, specifications and the cost of the building. e court further held that the type and size of the structure re material since the structure was to revert to the lessor the end of the term of the lease.

American Mining Co. v. Himrod-Kimball Mines Co.,

4 Colo. 186, 235 P.2d 804 (1951). In that case, the court

1d a contract incomplete which provided for the payment of

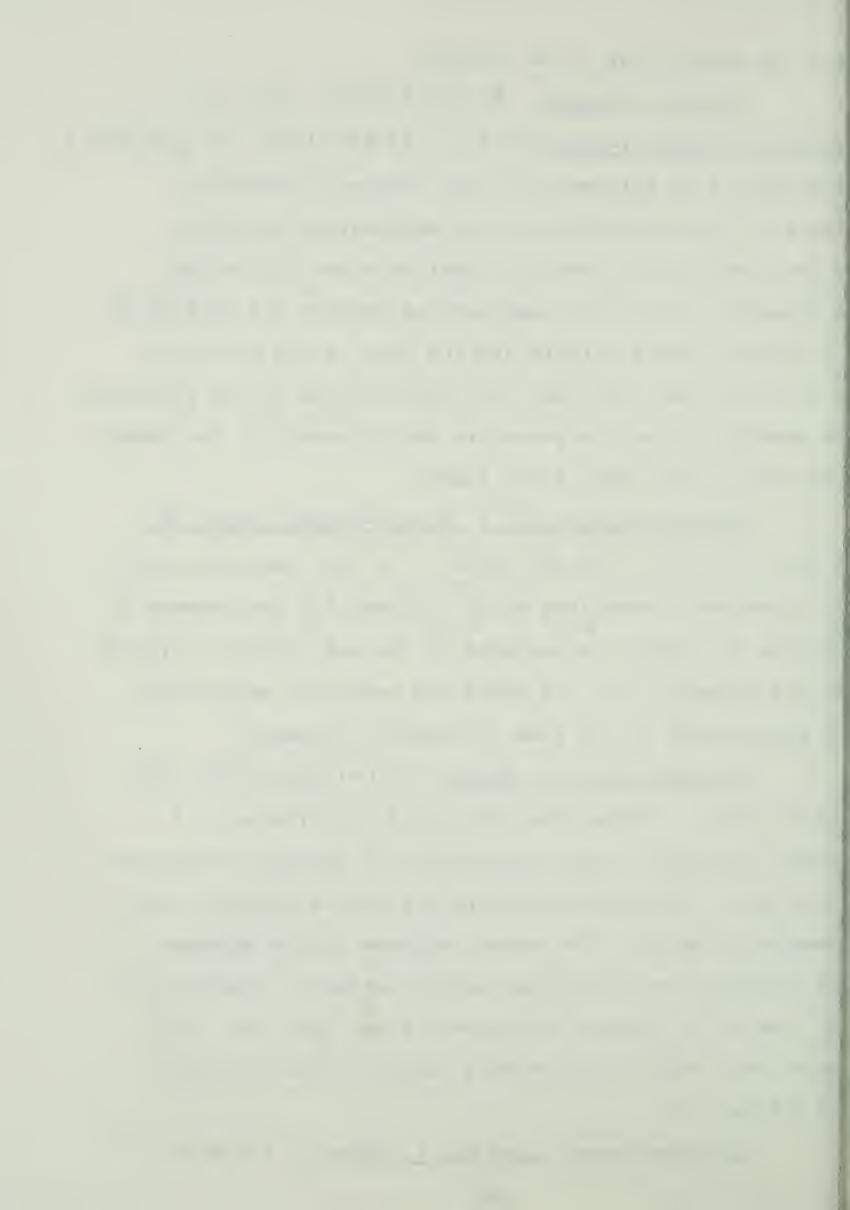
yalties of certain percentages of the net return on grounds

at the agreement did not state the method of calculating

ch percentages or the time or manner of payment.

Colorado Corp. v. Smith, 121 Cal.App.2d 374, 263
2d 79 (1954). There, the court held a provision in a
ntract relating to the construction of certain residences
too vague and uncertain making the entire contract unenreable in equity. The exact language in the agreement
ld uncertain was "the buyer herein agrees to construct at
ch time as he chooses residences of not less than 1200
uare feet, each on the parcels facing on Gault Street."
63 P.2d at 80)

Chatham-Trenary Land Co. v. Sw cart, 22 Mich.



ovided that the defendants were obligated to pay for 000 acres of land each year. The agreement did not produce a way for selecting the parcels of land to be sold. Ecourt denied specific performance on the basis that such provision was ambiguous and incapable of being specificly performed, holding that the parties should have stated early the manner of executing provisions of the contract.

Andreula v. Slovak Gymnastic Union Sokol Assembly 223, 138 N.J.Eq. 260, 47 A.2d 878 (1964), aff'd, 140 [.Eq. 171, 53 A.2d 191 (1947). There, the court, in mying specific performance of an agreement, held a prosion in a lease providing that "the tenant herein shall be the first option to purchase said premises" (47 A.2d 878) as being too uncertain for failing to provide a

Sweeting v. Campbell, 8 Ill.2d 54, 132 N.E.2d 523 956). In that case, a contract relating to the financing mortgage failed to provide for the maturity dates of the est and second mortgages. The court held the agreement certain and denied specific performance of the contract.

andard for determining price.

Howard v. Beavers, 128 Colo. 541, 264 P.2d 858, 859

954). There, an agreement for the exchange of properties

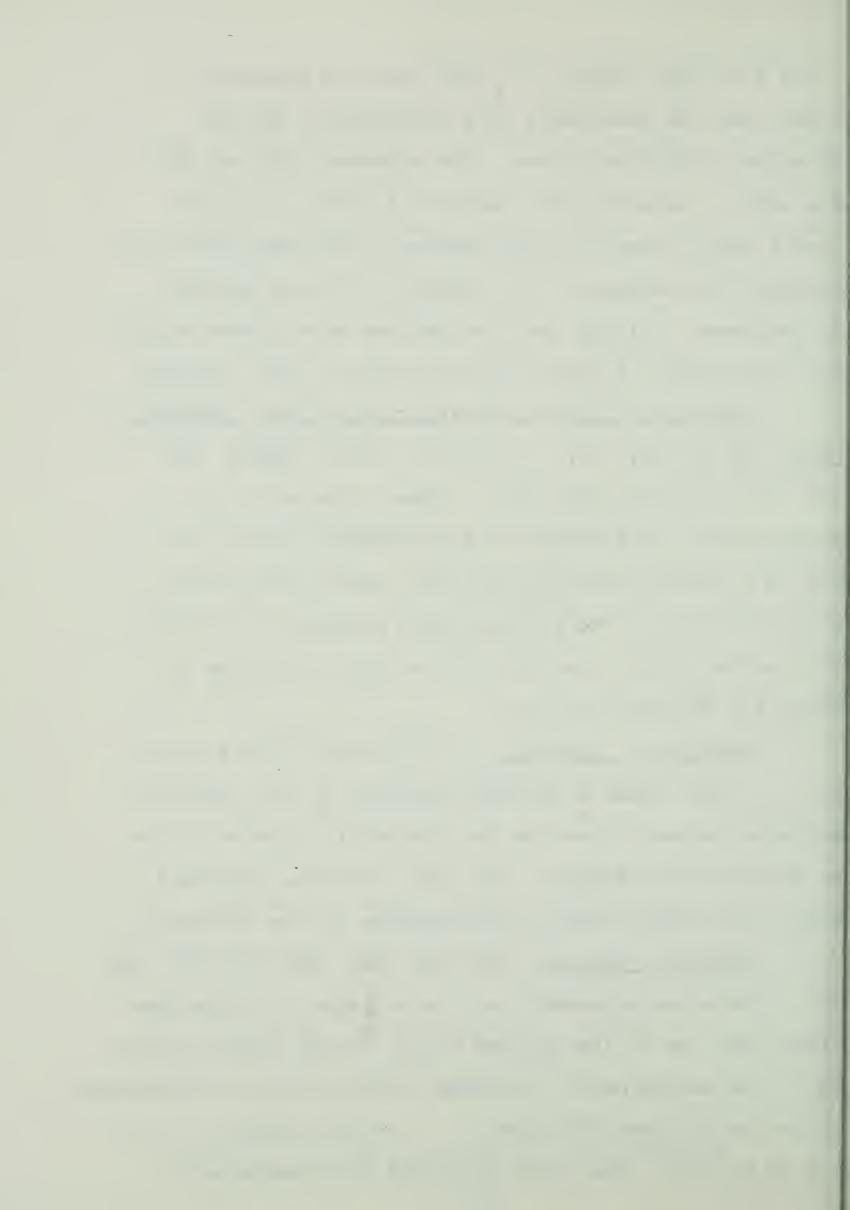
ovided that one of the parties would "convey back unto the

rty of the second part a mortgage on the property hereinabove

scribed as the East 120 acres . . . for \$14,800.00 . . ."

64 P.2d at 859). The court held that this language of

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e contract incomplete and therefore unenforceable.

To the same effect see:

Realty Improvement Co. v. Unger, 141 Md. 651, 119 Atl. 450 (Md. App. 1922);

Williams v. Manchester Building Supply Company, 213 Ga. 99, 97 S.E.2d 129 (1957); and

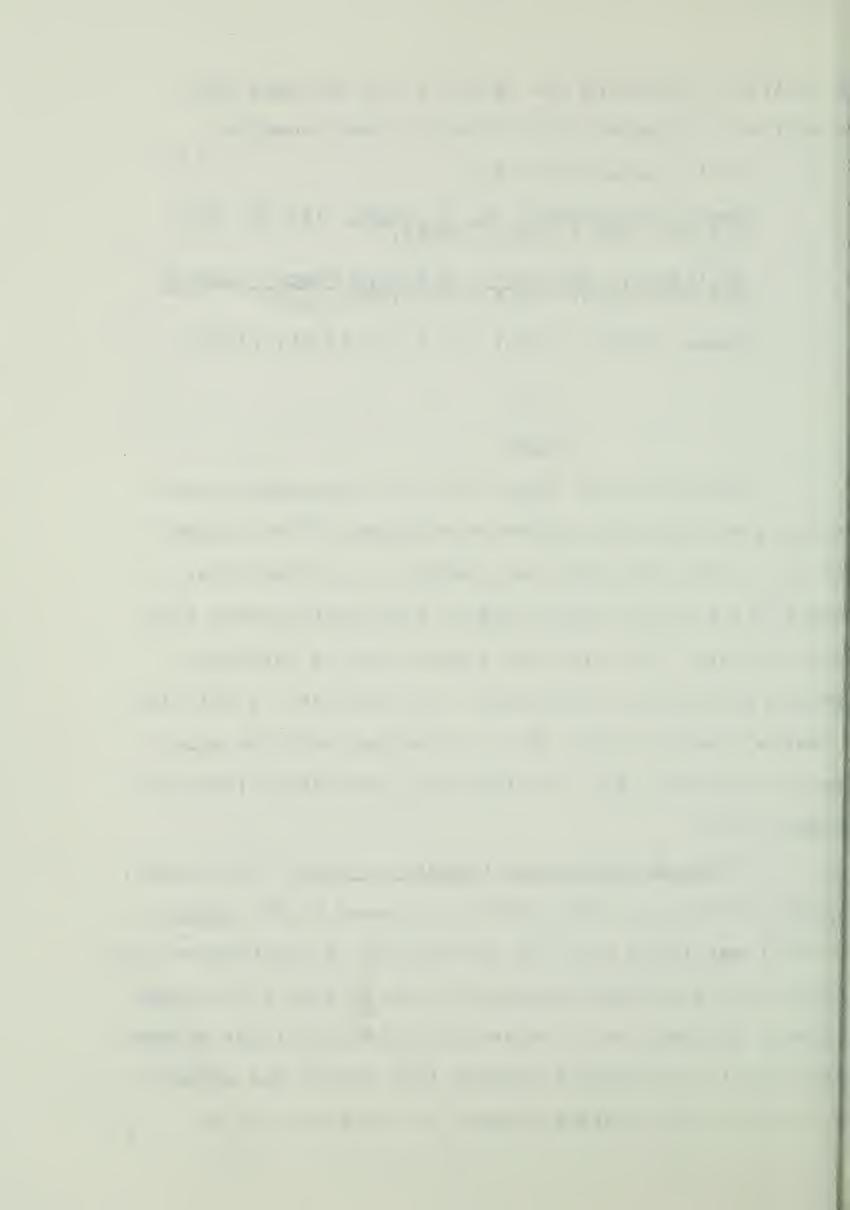
Cases cited in Annot., 60 A.L.R. 2d 251 (1958).

III

WAIVER

Appellees have shown that the subordination prosion is an essential and material term of the alleged oftion to lease and that the uncertainty of the clause enders the alleged option invalid and unenforceable as a atter of law. The Appellant argues that if the subornation provision is uncertain, the Appellant is entitled "waive" the provision thus eliminating both the subornation provision and the resulting uncertainty from the leged option.

In Magna Development Company v. Reed, 228 Cal.App. 230, 39 Cal.Rptr. 284 (1964) (discussed at 25, supra), e court was faced with the uncertainty of a subordination vision in a purchase agreement coupled with will namess one of the parties to waive this provision in an attempt enforce the purchase agreement (The waiver was actually et forth in the counteraffidavit of the plaintiff



fendant's metion for summary judgment and support not fendant's metion fendant's metio

"Plaintiff als argues that even file subord nation clause is incertain as a matter of aw, it has eliminated the uncertainty by walving the benefit of the clause. . . The attempted walver is ineffective for two reasons. . . . Fectody, if a party were permitted to waive defective provisions going to the essence of a contract, the court, in effect, would be allowing the unitateral creation of a new, different contract. A party to a contract cannot erase uncertainty therefrom by waiving such uncertainty and thereby restore its contractual validity."

milarly, in Roven v. Miller, 168 Cal.App.2d 391, 335 P.2d 1, 335 P.2d 1035 (1959) (discussed at 21, supra), where e optionee attempted to cure the defect of an indefinite bordination provision by waiver of the provision, the court 1d that the option had expired prior to the offer of waiver 35 P.2d at 1041). Appellant does not cite any case involved the waiver of an uncertain subordination provision.

One group of cases (hereinafter called

Neely v. Broadstreet Nat'l Bank, 6 F. Supp. 39 (E.N. 1936);

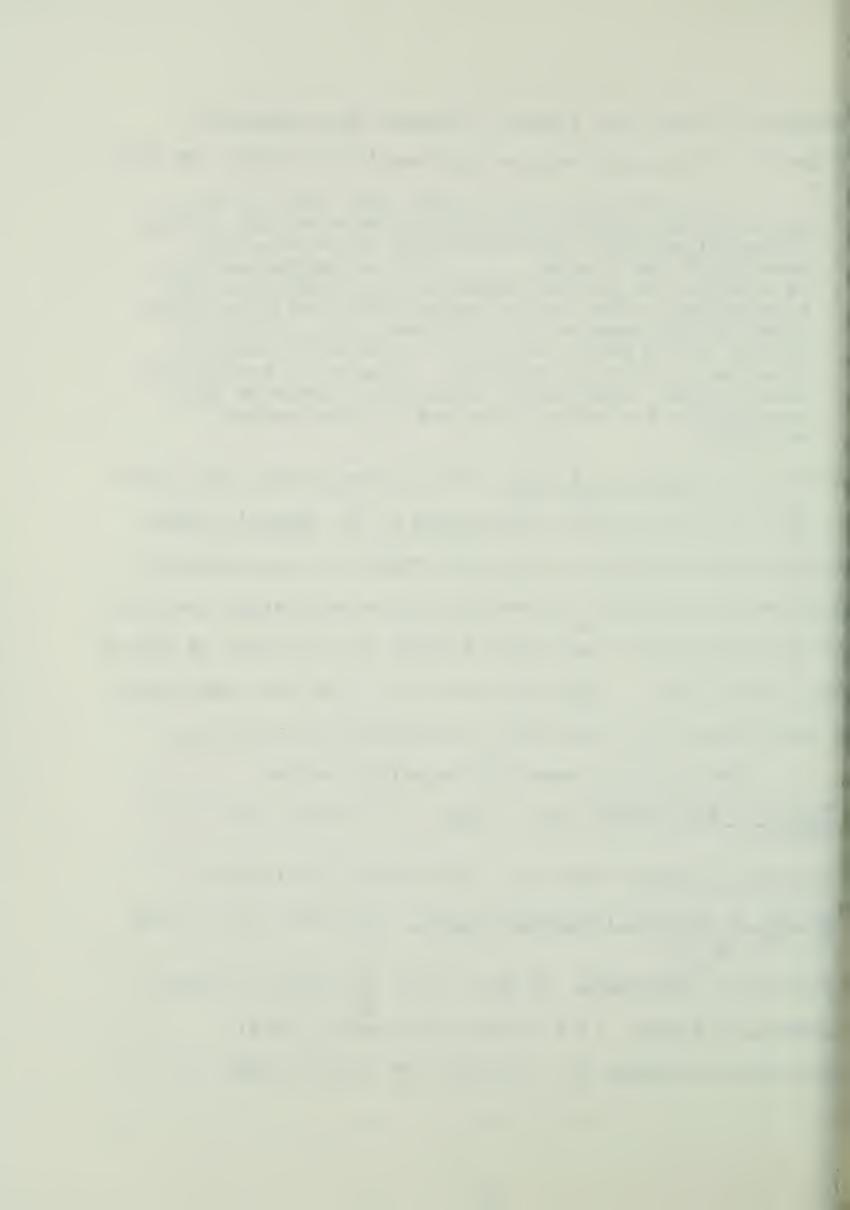
Eppstein v. Kuhn, 225 Ill. 15, 80 l.E. 81 (190);

Wright v. Houdaille-Hershey Corp., 321 Mich. 21, 31 N.W. 2d 845 (1948);

Torelle v. Templeman, 94 Mont. 149, 21 P.2d 60 (1933);

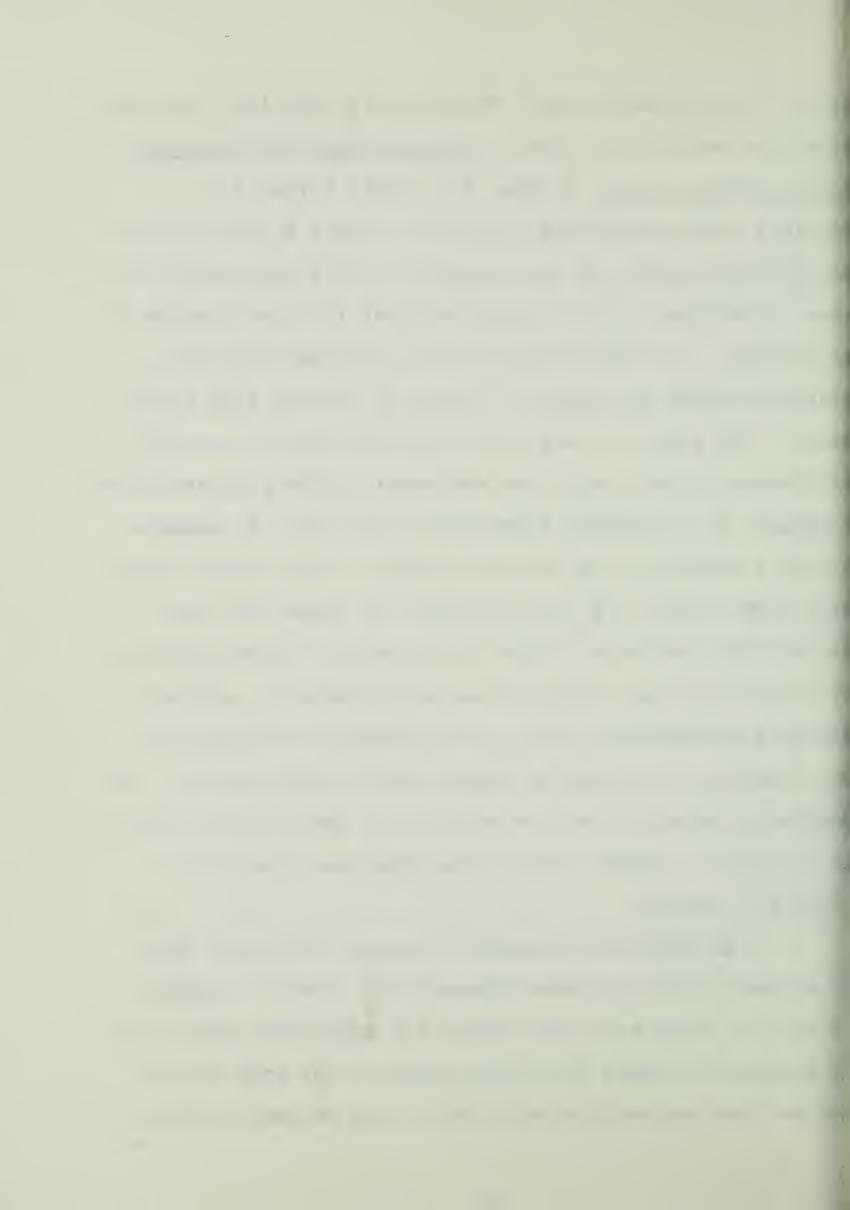
Jasper v. Wilson, 4 N.M. 482, 94 P. 951 (1901);

Prilik v. Goodman, 111 N.Y. 2d 9 6 (S.Ct. 1952).



iver of performance cases) cited by the Appellant nv lves tuations analogous to that in Koon v. hau Iry Foods and cery Company, Ltd., 30 Haw. 313 (1928) (Brief for pellant p.20), where the plaintiff brought a suit for the ecific performance of an agreement for the assignment of a ase. The Hawaii court recognized that full performance of e contract could not be specifically decreed since the fendant-lessee was unable to obtain a release from a subssee. The plaintiff was held to be entitled to specific rformance in part and to an abatement in the purchase price damages for defendant's failure to perform. An example such a waiver in the factual context of the instant case uld have arisen if a valid contract to lease had been eated with the terms of the subordination clause definitely t forth, and then the Appellees were unable to perform cause a pre-existing lien on the property prevented the bordination of the fee as agreed upon by the parties. The pellant then w uld be in a position to spec fically enforce e contract to lease, waiving the Appellees' failure to mpletely perform.

The Appellant assumes throughout its brief that e alleged option to lease ripened into a valid contract n all its terms save one" (Brief for Appellant p.25), and s argument is based upon that premise. Not only is the emise thus assumed the very issue to be decided in this



se but all the warver of performance cases cited by the pellant deal with contracts that are valid, binding and rtain in all their terms, the only problem being whether e terms are specifically enforceable or whether equity is e proper remedy.

The Appellant cites a second group of cases (hereinter called deferred payment cases) involving contracts or tions for the purchase of real property which were held ecifically enforceable by the purchaser where a provision redeferred payment was indefinite but the purchasers offered ll payment of the purchase price in cash. However, in all the deferred payment cases the waiver was either made within the time period allowed in the contract or the contract was lent as to time. In the instant case, the date of expiration of the alleged option was August 1, 1963 and the coellees made their offer of waiver in open court 17 months ter the time to exercise the option expired, and 14 months ter their own answer and counterclaim for specific perfor-

Morris v. Ballard, 16 F.2d 175 (D.C.Cir. 1926);

Blanton v. Williams, 209 Ga. 16, 71 S.E.2d 461 (1952);

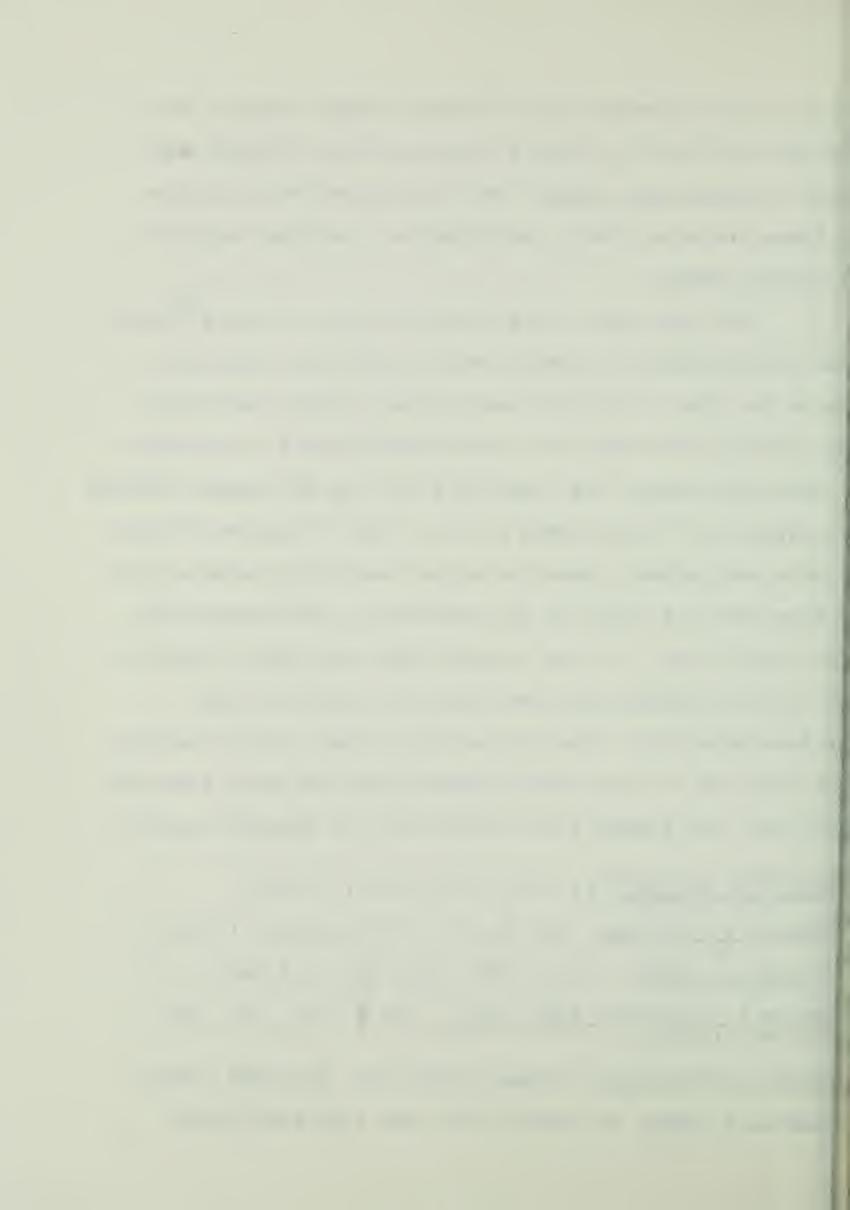
Trotter v. Lewis, 185 Md. 528, 45 A.2d 329 (1946);

Levine v. Lafayette Plda. Corp., 103 N.J.Eq. 121, 142

Atl. 441 (1928);

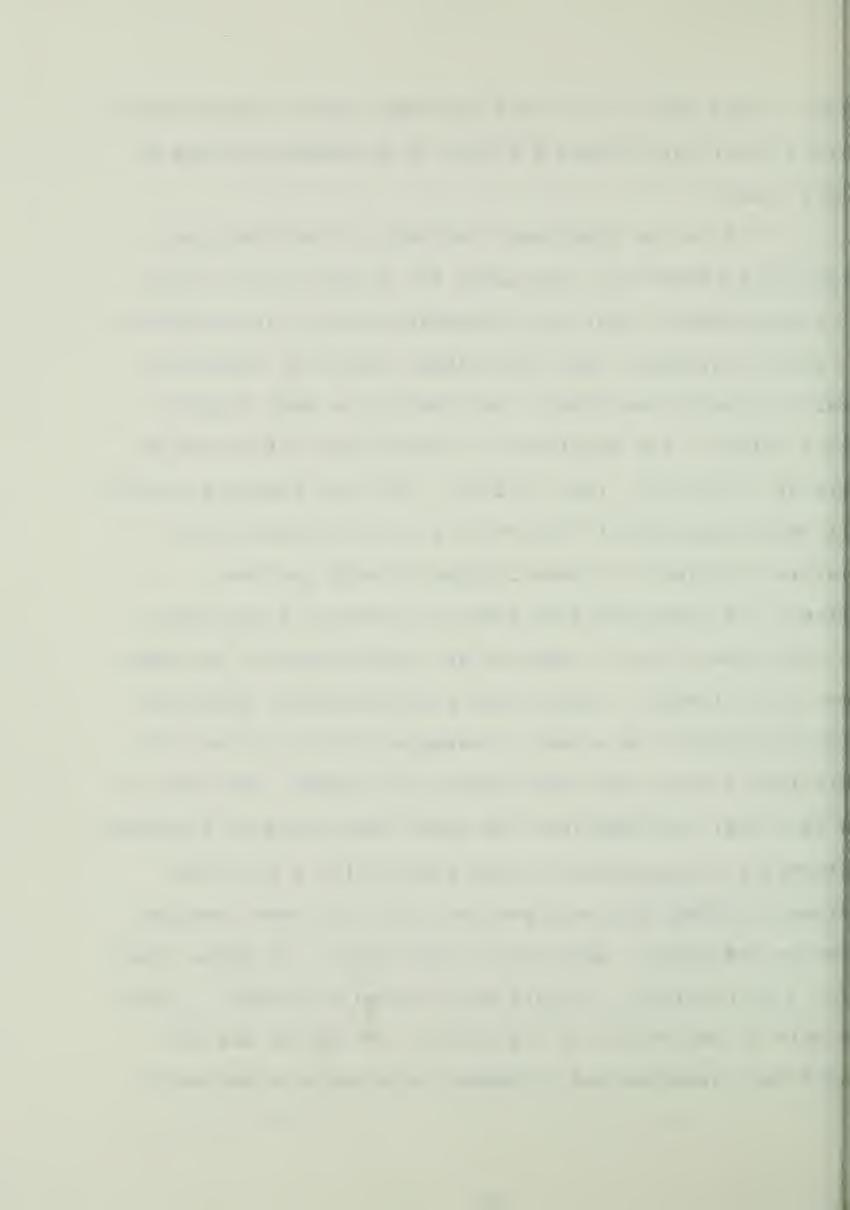
Haire v. Patterson, 63 Wash.2d 282, 386 P.2d 353 (1963);

Hubbell v. Ward, 40 Wash.2d 779, 246 P.2d 468 (1952).



nce in this action. No case has been cited in discovered ere a court has allowed a waiver of an essent a term at ch a time.

It is the Appellees' content on that the uncernty of an essential term makes the alleged ption volume d unenforceable under any circumstances but, assuming for e sake of argument that the alleged option to lease was pable of being exercised, the guestion is what rights re created in the Appellant by its delivery of notice of ercise on July 26, 1963 (R:5,45). The only possible result a valid exercise of the option would be an executory lateral contract to lease binding on both parties. wever, the Appellant even after its notice of exercise, s never been bound to execute any lease since it has been ee at all times to insist upon a subordination provision which provision is by way of example, but not by way of mitation") absolutely satisfactory to itself. In view of e fact that the Appellant has never been bound by a pr m se accept a lease granted by the plaintiffs, a bilateral ntract binding upon both parties could not have resulted m the defendant's exercise of the option. It seems clear at if no bilateral contract was created by lucust 1, 1922, e date of expiration of the option, the prion was not fectively accepted and is deemed rejected as a matter of



Time is of the essence in an option which expressly efines the duration of the offer. IA Corbin, Contracts

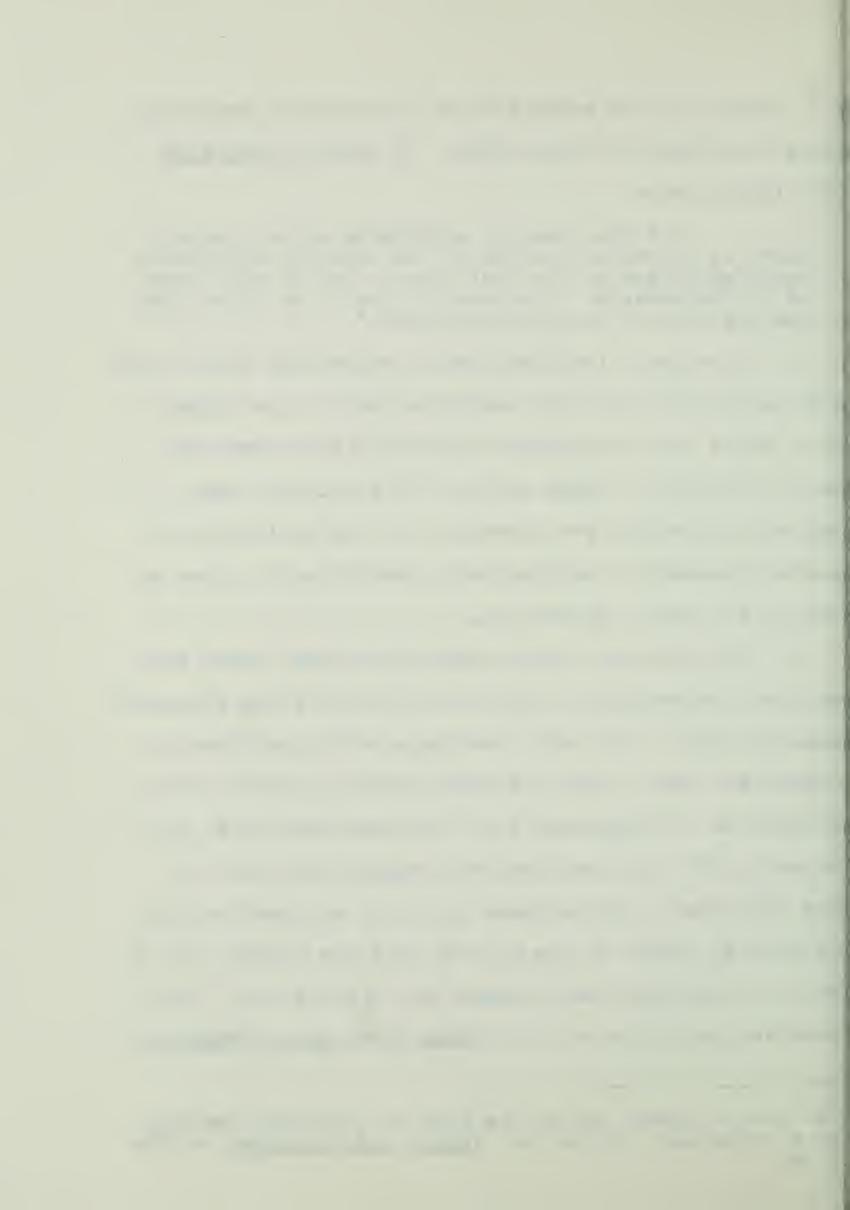
273 (1963) states:

"If the time for acceptance of an ordinary offer is expressly limited by the offeror, acceptance must take place within that time or not at all; time is of the essence. The same is true of an offer that has the form of an option contract."

In effect, the Appellant is contending that it had continuous option for an indefinite period from August 1, 163 to waive the subordination provision and accept the fer to contract to lease without the provision, even ough such provision was necessary for the protection of essor's interests. The Appellant understandably cites no otherity for such a contention.

The decisions in the deferred payment cases are used upon the assumption that the provision being warved is benefit only to the party seeking specific performance. Le Appellant admits that the subordination clause in this use might be of some benefit to the Appellees (Brief for appellant p.28), but the Appellant requests the court to ange the terms of the alleged option by eliminating the abordination clause on the grounds that the probability of emefit to the Appellees is based upon speculation. This is precisely what the court in Magna Development Company v.

Failure to accept during the term of the option amounts to a rejection. 55 Am. Jur. <u>Vendor and Furchaser</u>, p.518, \$ 39.



ed, supra, and the court below declined to recouse the words of the court below (F:11):

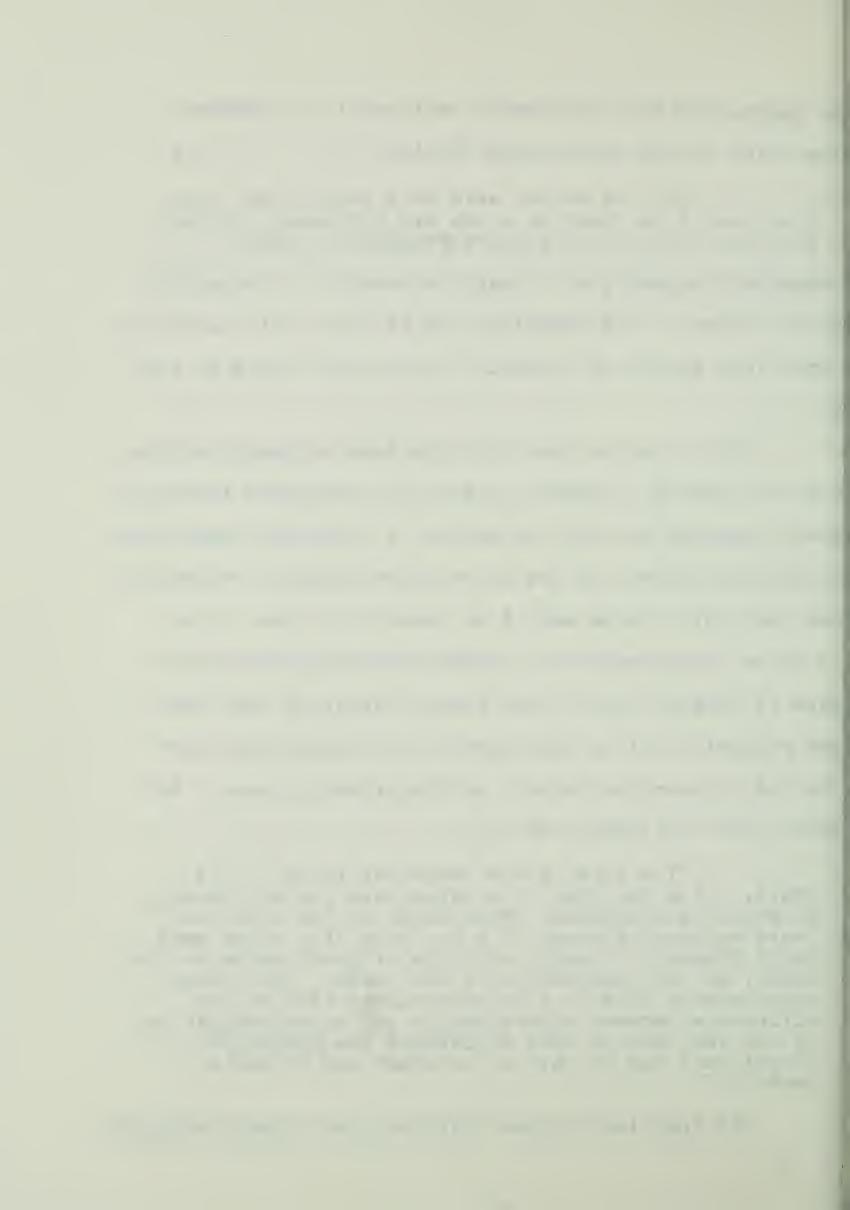
"If the warver were here sanct ned, this court would be creating a new and different cintratter from that which both parties attempted to make."

e Appellant argues that unless the benefit of the succenation clause to the Appellees can be shown with certainty e Appellant should be allowed to waive the clause at any me.

It is obvious that the Appellees contemplated that ey would receive a benefit by having a completed structure their premises through the device of a properly negotiated cordination clause and the court below properly refused to sume that this clause was of no benefit to them. The urt below recognized that a subordination provision in lease is normally one of the factors assuring that the ased property will be developed to its highest and best e to the substantial benefit of the property wher. As ated by the court below (R:117):

"The term of the lease was to be 56 1/2 years. If a building of x value were placed therein, it might be completely depreciated by the time the lease expired, whereas if a building if y value were built thereon, it might still be of great value to the lessor at the termination of the lease. The difference between an x or y building might well be the difference between subordination and no subordination of the fee, and in that difference the pair of lappellees had an abvious interest and retental benefit."

The Appellant argues that the court should eliminate



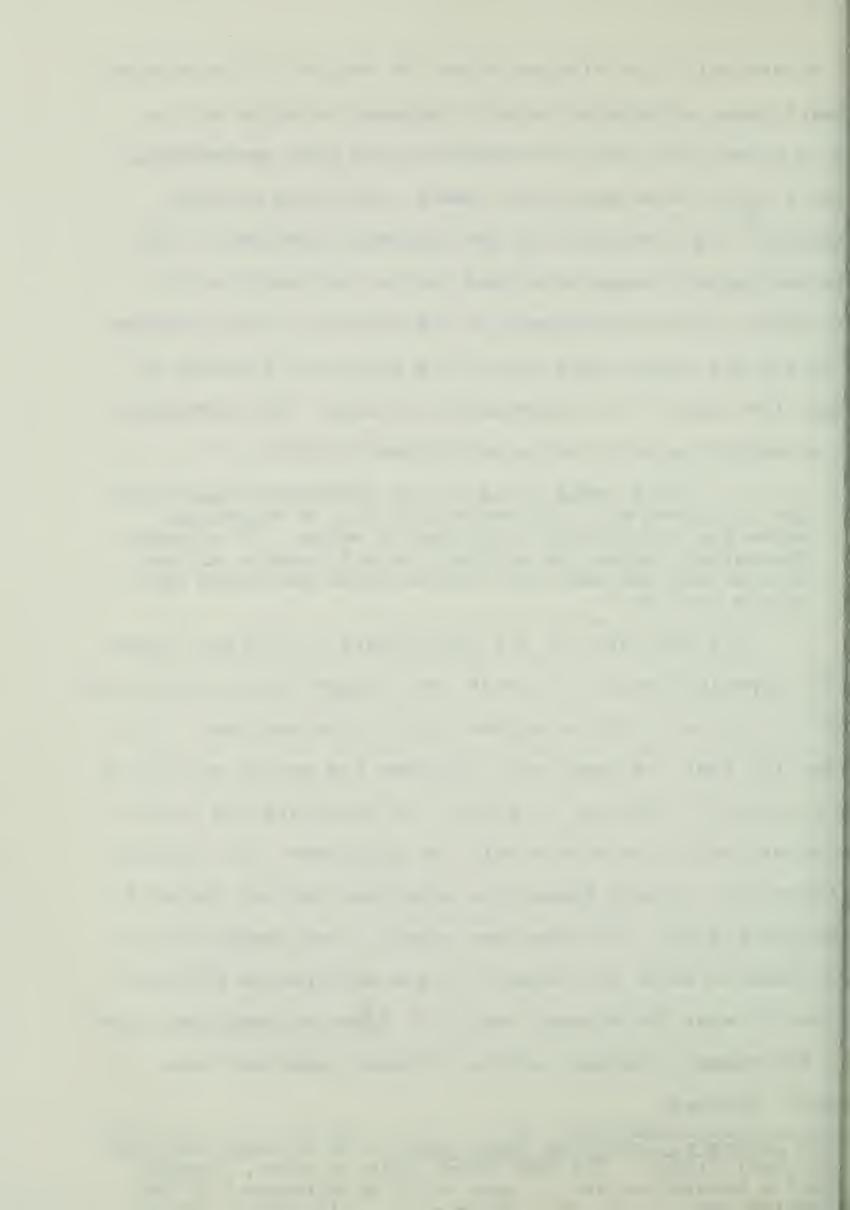
emote possibility that the sellers could have derived some enefit from the extension of credit. With one possible 1/ception the provisions of the contracts involved in the efferred payment cases permitted, either expressly or by aplication, the cash payment of the balance of the purchase ice and the courts were not in the position of having to ange the terms of the agreements involved. The distinction is noted by the court below as follows (R:116):

e subordination provisions since the courts in the deferred

"The cases cited by the defendant [appellant] are in accord with its contention that a vendee may waive his conditional right, which waiver, if allowed, thereafter leaves the contract an enforceable abligation within the ambit of its own terms as agreed upon by the parties."

The exclusion of the subordination provision urged the Appellant would not leave the alleged option within the bit of its own terms as agreed upon by the parties. It is towarthy that the Appellant concludes the waiver section of s brief with offering, in effect, to negotiate the terms of e subordination provision with the Appellees ("by offering waive only so much thereof as appellees desire" (Frief for pellant p.31)). The Appellees submit that negotiation of alteration as to the terms of the subordination provision exactly what the alleged option to lease contemplated, and at the summary judgment on the "illusory contract" was operly entered.

See Levine v. Lafavette Bldg. Corp., 103 N.J.Eg. 21, 142 Atl. 441 (1928). The New Jersey rule is clear, lowever, that a belated warver in open clurt as attempted in the instant case would not be t lerated. 42 Atl. at 441.



AN ACTION FOR DAMAGES IN LIE OF SPECIFIC PERFORMANCE CANNOT BE MAINTAINED UNDER THE LATULE OF FRAUDS.

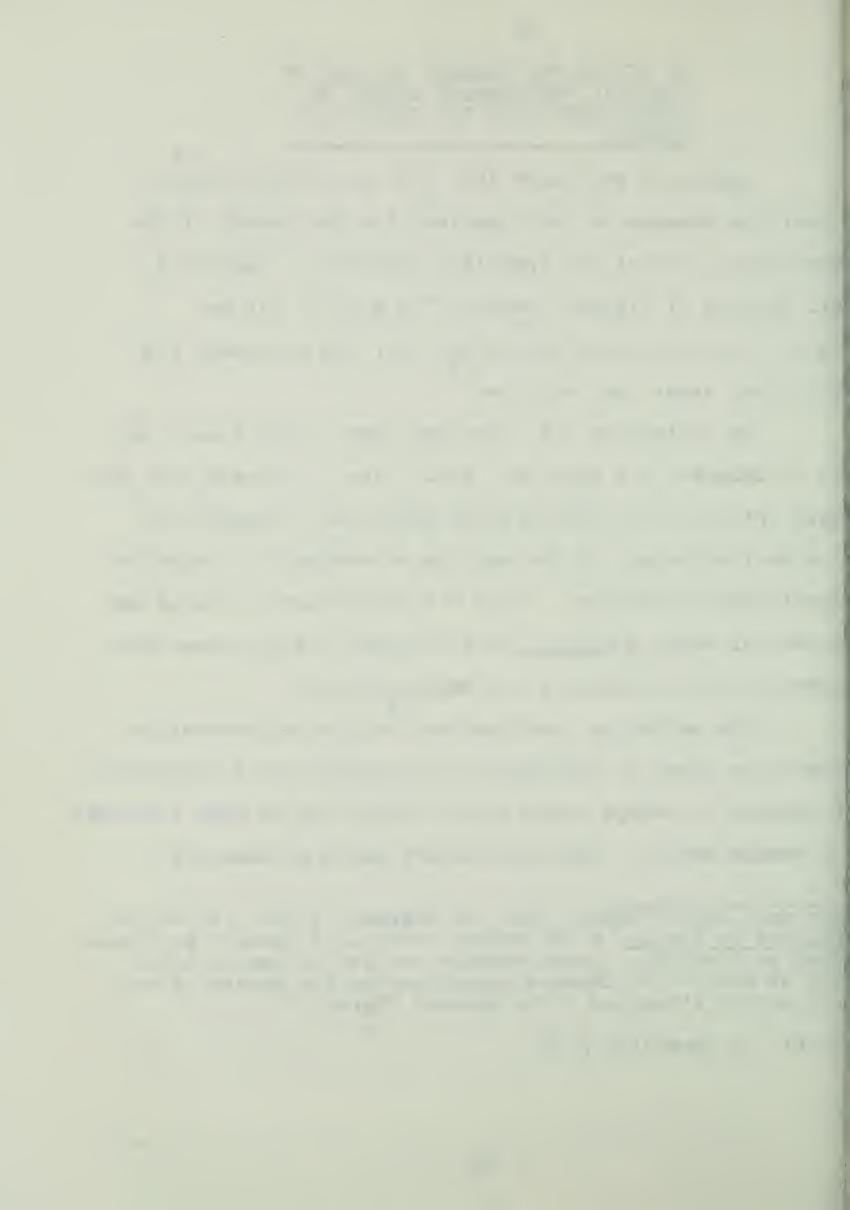
Appellant maintains that the court below erred in awarding damages to the Appellant for the breach of the leged option (Brief for Appellant pp.32-34). Under the vaii Statute of Frauds, however, "no action" can be ught if the documents relied upon for the agreement are lifticient under that statute.

By contending that the Appellant is entitled to an and of damages, the Appellant would have to concede that the leged option is not sufficiently definite or complete in terms (including, of course, the subordination clause) to specifically enforced. Since the subordination clause was essential term, a fortiori the contract did not come into stence to be the basis for a damage action.

The waiver by the Appellant of the subordination vision in order to "eliminate any possibility of difficulty the respect to damage computation" cannot now be made the basis a damage action. Appellant cannot waive an essential

Revised Laws of Hawaii 1955, as amended, § 190. 49 Am. Jur. Statute of Frauds, § 539 states: "It is a general principle that an invalid or unenforceable contract forms no basis for an action for damages occasioned by the breach of any obligation attempted to be imposed thereby."

Brief for Appellant p.33.



m (simply for alleged ease in damage computation:) and ll have a contract remaining for a claim for damages.

The court below's determination that a proper sublination clause was for the benefit of both lesser and lessee
a clear inference from the undisputed facts. The parties
templated the construction of a complete structure on the
sed premises. The magnitude of the structure and the
sor's reversionary interest in the completed structure
all tied to a properly negotiated subordination clause,
ch negotiation was also contemplated by the parties.
ellant's waiver of an essential but not fully negotiated
m of a contract furnishes no basis giving a remedy for an
eged contract which was not completed, and hence not
ding on either party.

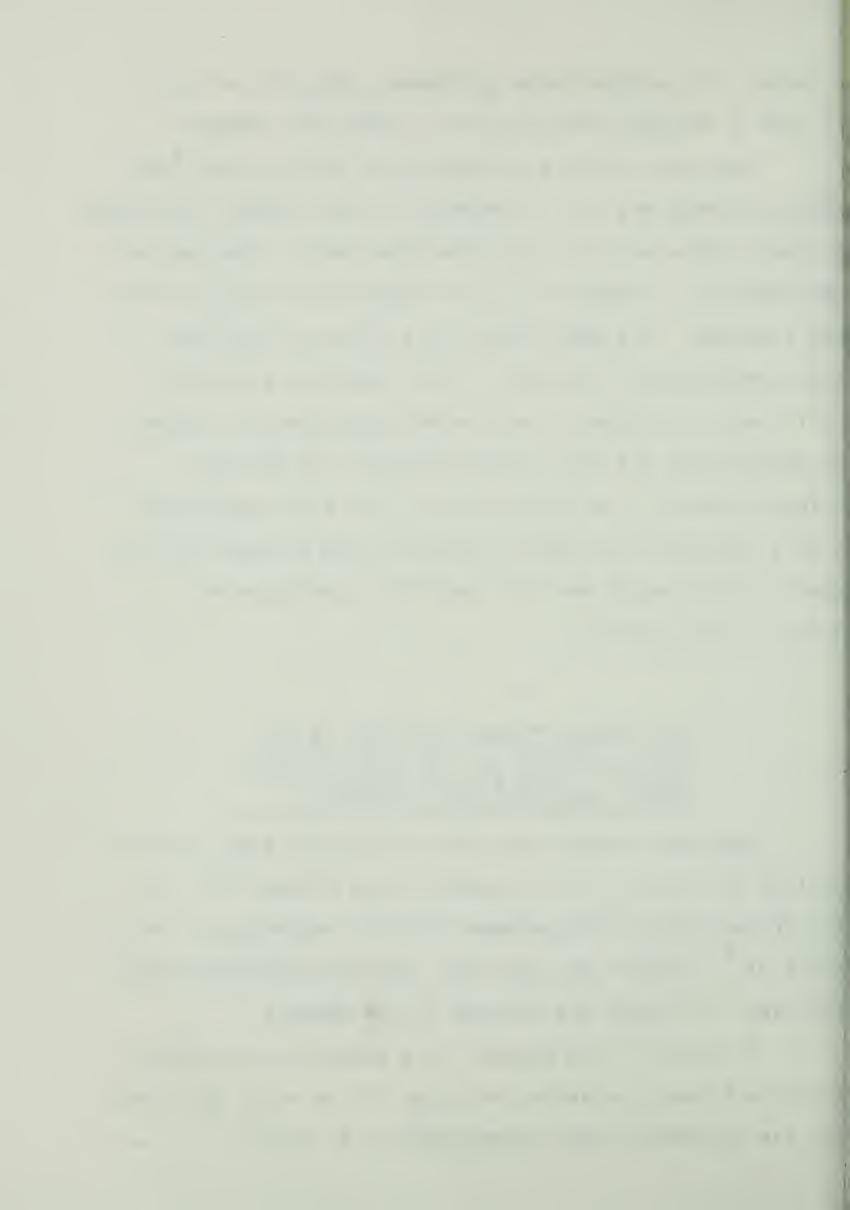
V

LIS PENDENS CANNOT BE FILED IN AN ACTION PENDING IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF HAWAII INVOLVING REAL PROPERTY.

Appellant argues that the court below also erred in celling its notice of lis pendens filed October 25, 1963 the grounds that a lis pendens does not expire upon the uance of a judgment but only upon the final determination the case, including the outcome of any appeals.

A notice of lis pendens in a federal action cannot perly be filed in a state recording office until the state pts the necessary laws contemplated by 28 1.3.7.

4 /



1964, i.e., a specific statute authorizing a notice of action concerning real property pending in a United ates District Court to be recorded in the same manner as quired of a notice of an action concerning real property anding in a state court.

The decision of the court below dated November 2, $\frac{2}{}$ is disparitive of this point:

"The legislative history of the present R.L.H. 1955, Section 230-42, shows that the Senate Judiciary Committee reported on H.B. 181 of Hawaii's 1927 legislature, creating a new section of the Revised Laws of Hawaii 1925 relating to notice of pendency of action:

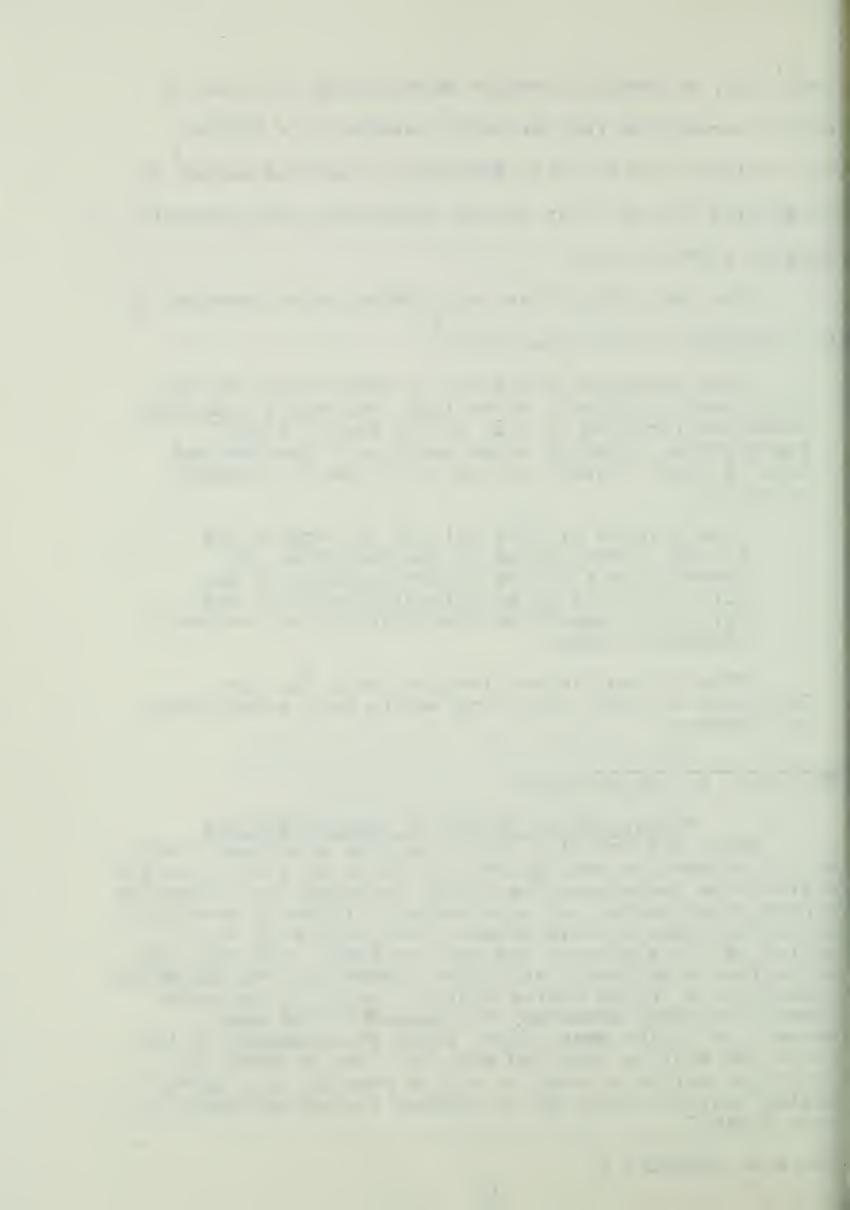
'The purpose of this Bill is to require the filing in the office of the Registrar of Conveyances a notice of the pendency of any action brought in any Circuit Court [of the Territory] involving the title to real estate.' (Emphasis added.)

"The United States District Court for the Territory of Hawaii had long before been established by Congress.

28 U S.C. § 1964 provides:

"Where the law of a State requires a notice of an action concerning real property pending in a court of the State to be registered, recorded, docketed, or indexed in a particular manner, or in a certain office or county or parish in order to give constructive notice of the action as it relates to the real property, and such law authorizes a notice of an action concerning real property pending in a United States district court to be registered, recorded, docketed, or indexed in the same manner, or in the same place, those requirements of the State law must be complied with in order to give constructive notice of such an action pending in a United States district court as it relates to real property in such State."

See also Appendix A.



"United States Senate Report No. 2 31 a. F.F. 7306 -- which eventually became 28 U.S.C. § 1964 -- stated:

'The purpose of the proposed least ation is to provide that notice of an action . . . list pendens] with respect to real property, pending before a United States district court, must be recorded if the State law so provides, in order to be considered constructive notice to others that such action is pending.

* * * *

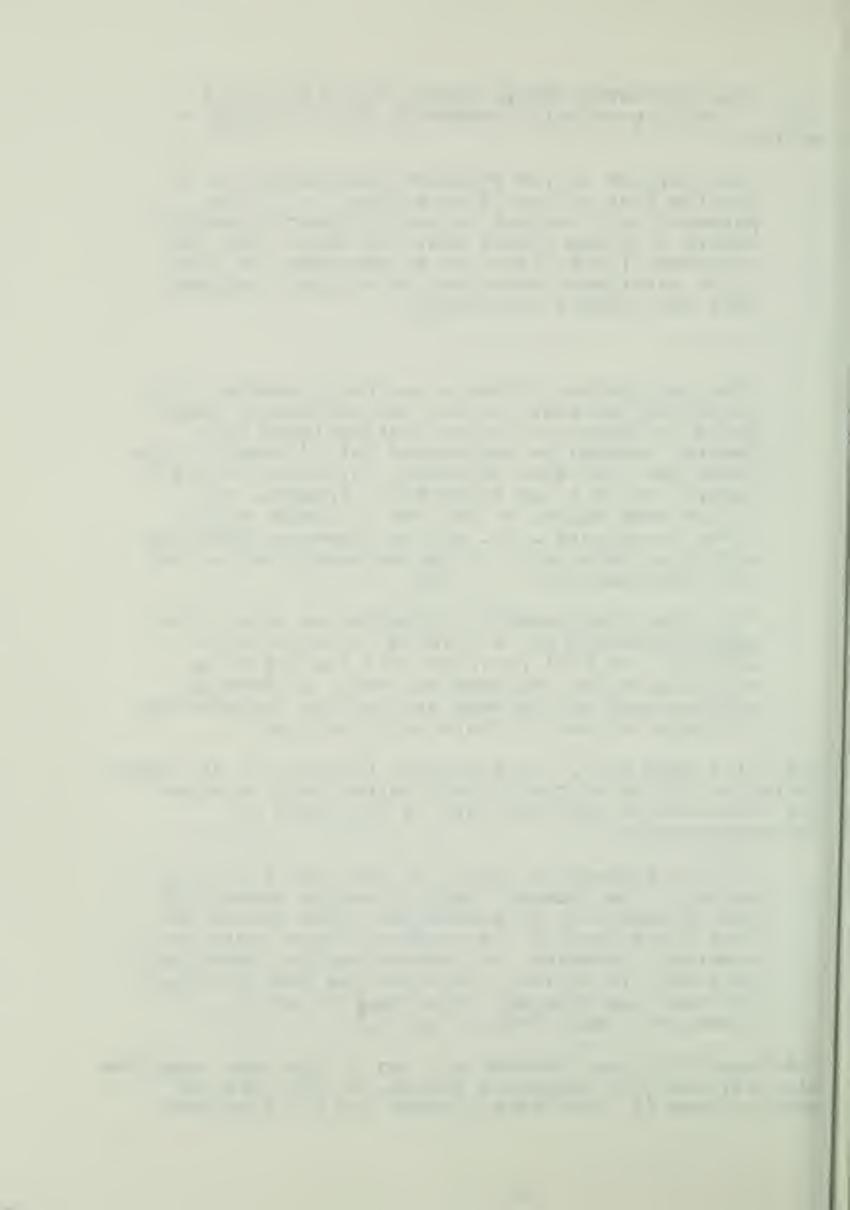
'The legislation contains two requirements: (1) the State law must require that not ce of local suits in State courts (as distinguished from Federal courts) be registered [etc.]; and (2) the State law must also expressly authorize notice of Federal suits to be registered, indexed, etc., in the same manner as notices in State courts. These provisions . . . will not become effective within a State until it has expressly authorized such registering, . . . etc. . . .

'In order that Federal litigants may obtain the same protection as is offered in State court actions, the bill provides that the State law authorizing the registering, etc., of Federal notices must be the same as that for registering of State notices in State court actions

Anent the same bill, the Assistant Director of the Administrative Office of the United States Courts advised the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives:

'[W] th respect to notice of the institution of suits in the Federal district courts concerning real property by providing that they should not have the effect of his pendens unless registered, recorded, docketed, or indexed as the State law provides, if in fact the State law does provide for such registering, recording, docketing, or indexing of such Federal suits.'

The Deputy Attorney General writing to the same committee also advised that committee that H. R. 73 m did not apply unless (1) the State already had a lis pendens



statute and (2) the laws of that State als provided for similar recording of notice of an action concerning real property pending before a United States district court in such State. The Assistant Secretary of the Interior, writing to the same committee, likewise advised that same committee to the same effect.

"From the legislative history of both the State and Federal acts, it becomes clear that Hawaii's lis pendens statute does not apply to suits pending in the United States district court, cf. King v. Davis, 137 Fed. 222, 240 (Cir.Ct. Va. 1905), and the registrar of the Bureau of Conveyances had neither the duty nor the legal power to accept and file the same under Section 343-47, R.L.H. 1955, since the lis pendens referred to in that section, being strictly a creature of the Hawaiian statutes, could and did refer only to cases filed in the circuit courts in the State of Hawaii."

Accordingly, the judgment cancelling the lis penders October 25, 1963 was proper in all respects (R:119-121).

VI

CONCLUSION

For the reasons stated herein, the judgment should n all respects be affirmed.

> Respectfully submitted, Russel lades

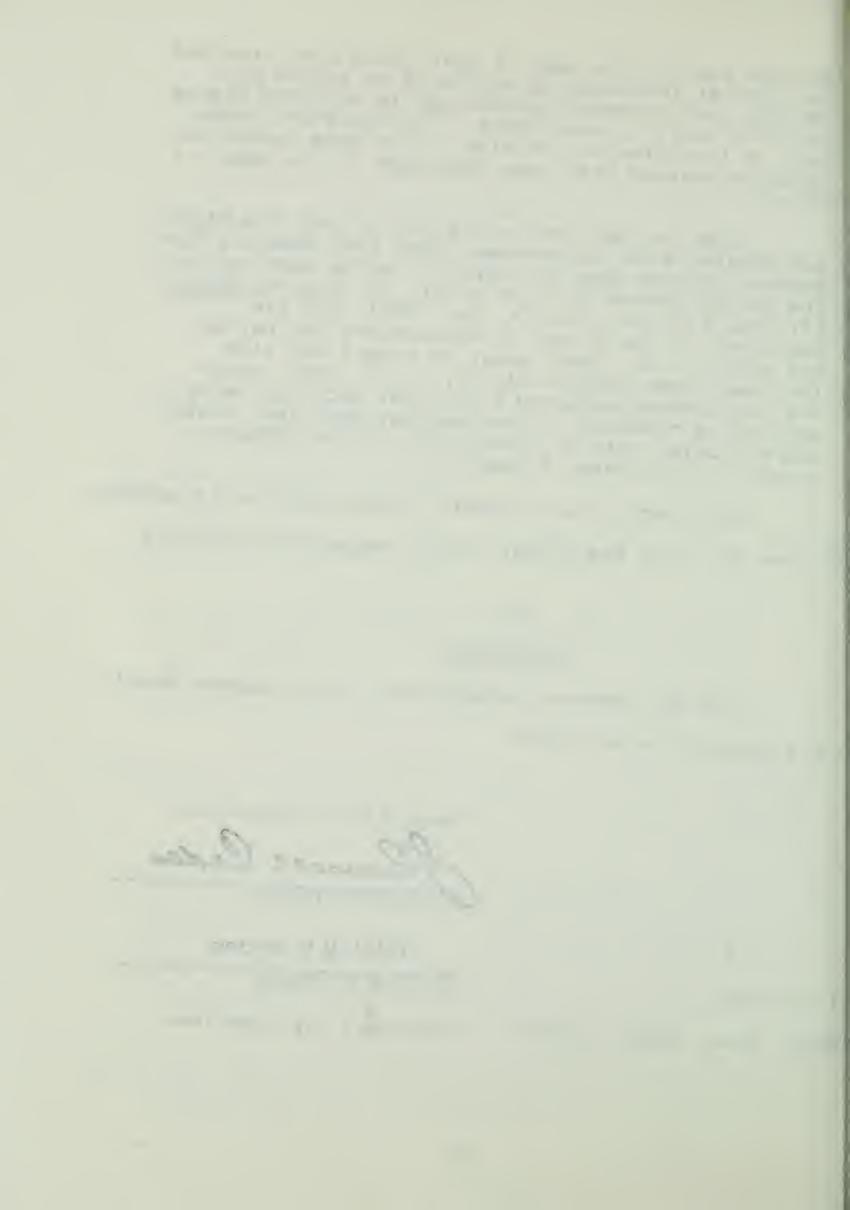
WILLIAM M SWOPE

WILLIAM W. JW PE

Attorneys for Appe lees

Of Counsel

INITH, WILD, BEEBE & CADES



CERTIFICATE

I certify that, in connection with the preparan of this brief, I have examined Rules 18 and 19 of
United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit,
I that, in my opinion, the foregoing brief is in full
upliance with those rules.

Russell CADES

WILLIAM M. SWOPE

WILLIAM M. SWOPE

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COLL. FOR THE DISTRICT OF HAWAII

EPH TAU TET HEW and HELEN NA HEW, husband and wife, RGE TAN and SHIZUKO RUTH TAN, band and wife,

Plaintiffs,

V .

LAHAINA-MAUI CORPORATION, alifornia corporation,

Defendant.

CIVIL No. 2192

DECISION ON PLAINTIFFS' MOTION TO REMOVE LIS PENDENS

Plaintiffs, owning real property on Maui, in 1963 cuted an option to lease the property to defendant's edecessors in interest. Before the expiration of the ion, defendant signed and delivered to the plaintiffs a ice of exercise of the option to lease. Within one the thereafter, plaintiffs informed defendant that such ion to lease was null and void, and on August 25, 1968, intiffs filed a complaint in the State court, seeking a cellation of the option and a declaration that it was all and void. Thereafter, defendant had the case removed this court on the grounds of diversity, and on Detorer 11, 198, filed a counterclaim seeking specific performance in lease in the form attached to the counterclaim.

On October 25, 1963, defendant, purporting to de under R. L. H. 1955 Section 230-42, recorded a notice of

 e pendency of the suit, i.e., lis pendens, in the Bureau. Conveyances, State of Hawaii. A similar notice was filed the the assistant registrar of the Land Court of the State. Hawaii under Section 342-78, R.L.H. 1955, since a portion the land involved was registered therein.

Thereafter, ruling upon plaintiffs' motion for mmary judgment, on June 30, 1965, this court entered judg-nt in favor of plaintiffs and against defendant, and dered the lis pendens removed.

Defendant gave timely notice of appeal, and on ne 30, 1965, filed a new lis pendens in the Bureau of nveyances. On September 9, 1965, a notice of motion to move lis pendens, or in the alternative posting a superdeas bond, was filed by the plaintiffs, and thereafter the me was argued and submitted.

As indicated from the motion, the defendant has ver filed a supersedeas bond under F.R.Civ.P. 62, 17 der to obtain a stay, and admittedly is relying upon the spendens to effect the same result -- without cost to e defendant.

Plaintiffs urge that a lis pendens notice of this deral action cannot properly be filed in the Bureau of nveyances because the State of Hawaii does not have a law ch as is contemplated by 28 U.S.C. § 1964, i.e., a specific atute authorizing a notice of an action concerning real operty pending in a United States district court to re

 ion concerning real property pending in the State court.
intiffs also urge that the operation of the notice of
pendens filed June 30, 1965, is preventing the plaintiffs
m dealing with or developing their property as is their
ht to do after the judgment in their favor, in the
ence of a supersedeas bond. Defendant urges (1) that
s court has no power to cancel the lis pendens of June
1965; (2) that even if plaintiffs contention regarding
effect of 28 U.S.C. § 1964 were correct, all that this
rt could do would be to rule that such filing of a lis
dens was unnecessary; and (3) that notice must be filed
h the Land Court under Section 342-78, R.L.H. 1955.

The legislative history of the present R.L.H.

5, Section 230-42, shows that the Senate Judiciary

mittee reported on H.B. 181 of Hawaii's 1927 legislature,

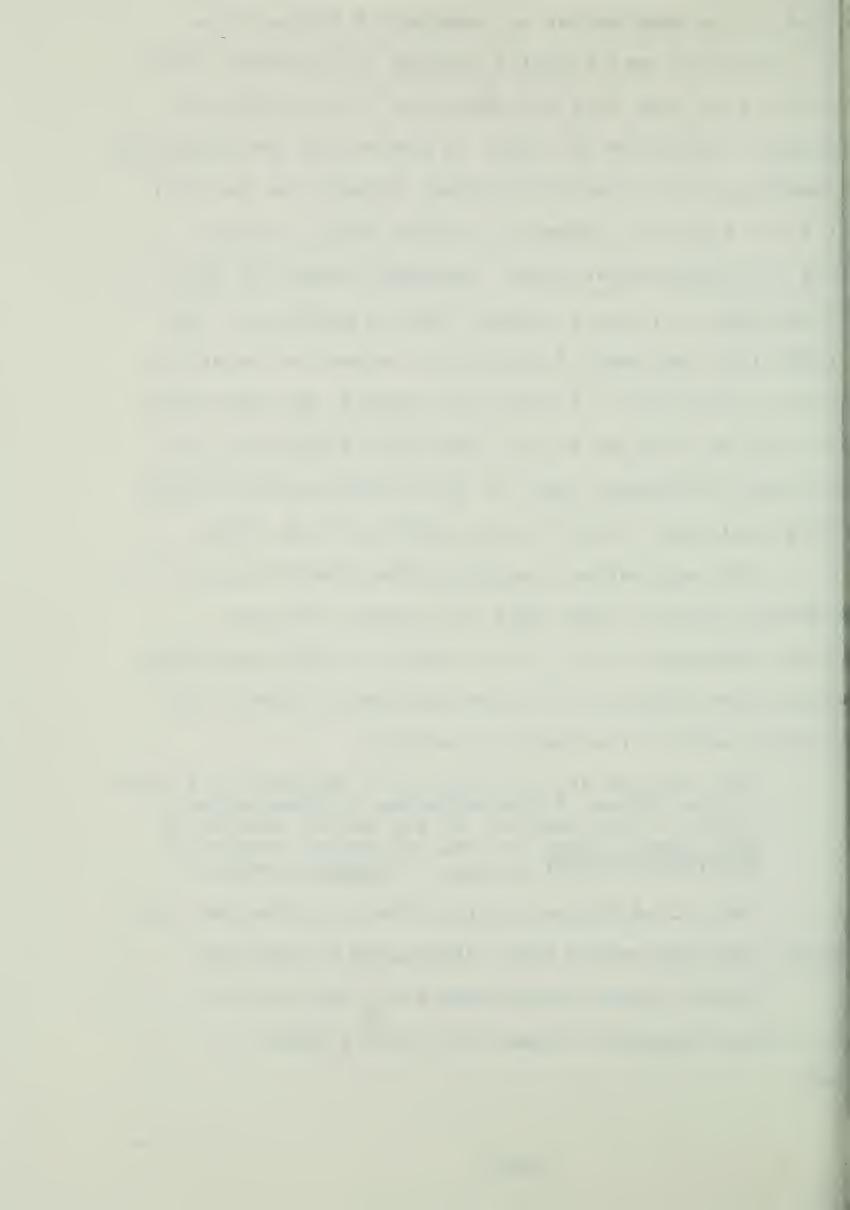
ating a new section of the Revised Laws of Hawaii 1925

ating to notice of pendency of action:

"The purpose of this Bill is to require the filing in the office of the Registrar of Conveyances a notice of the pendency of any action brought in any Circuit Court [of the Territory] involving the title to real estate." (Emphasis added.)

The United States District Court for the Territory Hawaii had long before been established by Congress.

United States Senate Report No. 2131 on H.R. 6 -- which eventually became 28 U.S.C. § 1964 -- ted:



* * * *

"The legislation contains two requirements: (1) the State law must require that notice of local suits in State courts (as distinguished from Federal courts) be registered [etc.]; and (2) the State law must also expressly authorize notice of Federal suits to be registered, indexed, etc., in the same manner as notices in State courts. These provisions . . . will not become effective within a State until it has expressly authorized such registering, . . . etc. . . .

"In order that Federal litigants may obtain the same protection as is offered in State court actions, the bill provides that the State law authorizing the registering, etc., of Federal notices must be the same as that for registering of State notices in State court actions . . . "

nt the same bill, the Assistant Director of the Administive Office of the United States Courts advised the mittee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives:

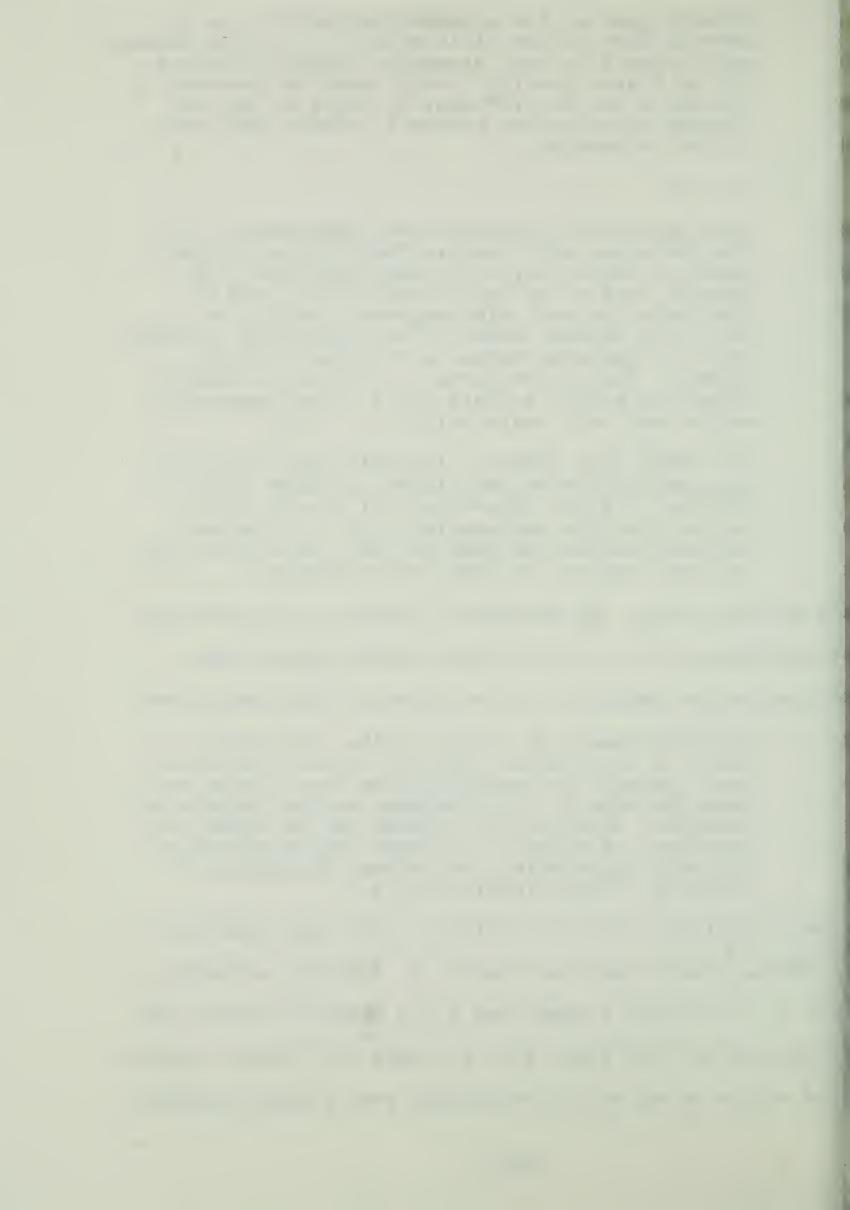
"[W]ith respect to notice of the institution of suits in the Federal district courts concerning real property by providing that they should not have the effect of lis pendens unless registered, recorded, docketed, or indexed as the State law provides, if in fact the State law does provide for such registering, recording, docketing, or indexing of such Federal suits."

Deputy Attorney General writing to the same committee

advised that committee that H. R. 7306 did not apply

ss (1) the State already had a lis pendens statute and

the laws of that State also provided for similar record
of notice of an action concerning real property pending



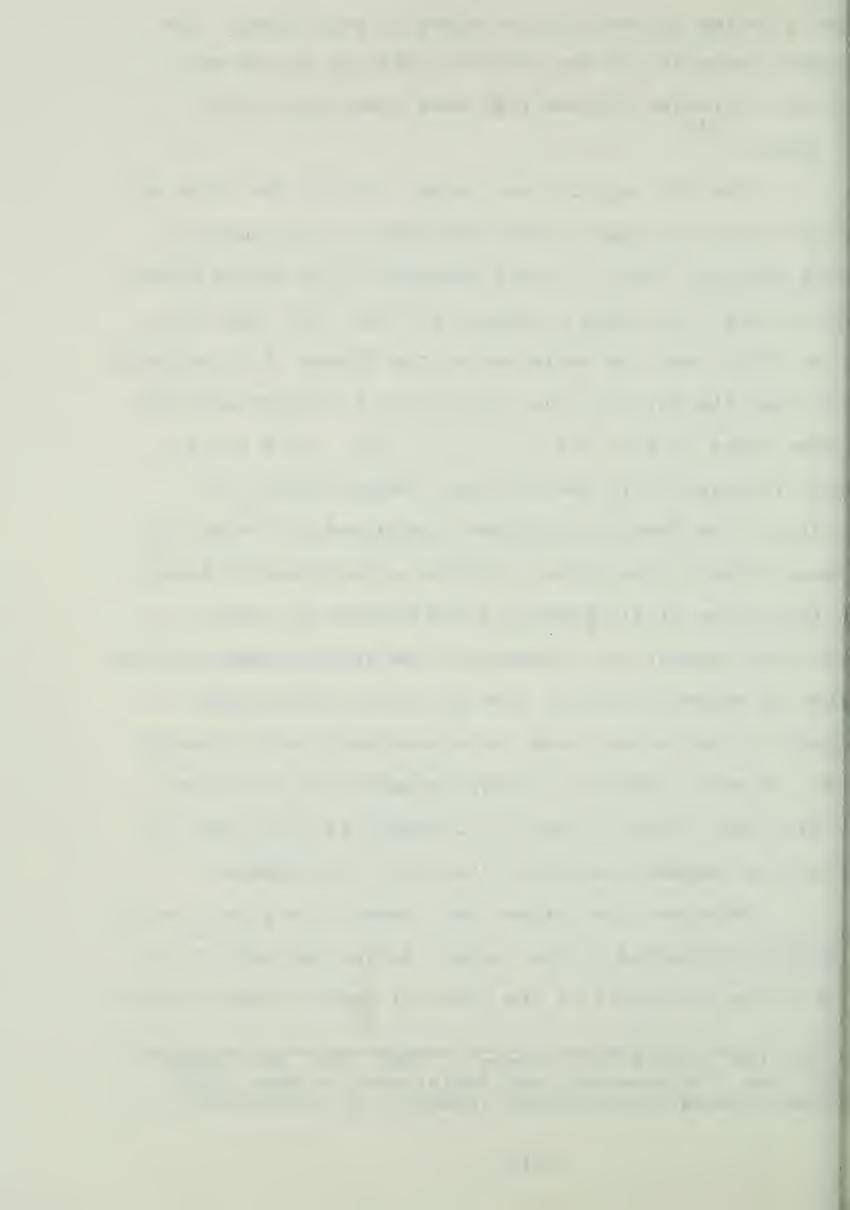
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From the legislative history of both the State and

eral acts, it becomes clear that Hawaii's lis pendens tute does not apply to suits pending in the United States trict court, cf. King v. Davis, 137 Fed. 222, 240 (Cir. Va. 1905), and the registrar of the Bureau of Conveyances neither the duty nor the legal power to accept and file same under Section 343-47, R.L.H. 1955, since the lis dens referred to in that section, being strictly a ature of the Hawaiian statutes, could and did refer only cases filed in the circuit courts in the State of Hawa 1. h the notice of lis pendens filed October 25, 1963, ore the judgment was rendered in the instant case, as well the lis pendens filed on June 30, 1965, filed after gment in the instant case, were improperly and illegally ed. We need, however, concern ourselves at this time y with that filed on June 30, inasmuch as this court as t of its judgment cancelled the first lis pendens.

Defendant also urges that inasmuch as a portion of property affected by the instant action has been regised in the Land Court of the State of Hawaii under Section

For the legislative history of H.R. 7306, see United tes Code, Congressional and Administrative News, 85th gress--Second Session 1958, Volume 2, pp. 3654-3558.



"The purpose of the proposed legislation is to provide that notice of an action . . . lis pendent with respect to real property, pending before a United States district court, must be recorded if the State law so provides, in order to be considered constructive notice to others that such action is pending.

* * * *

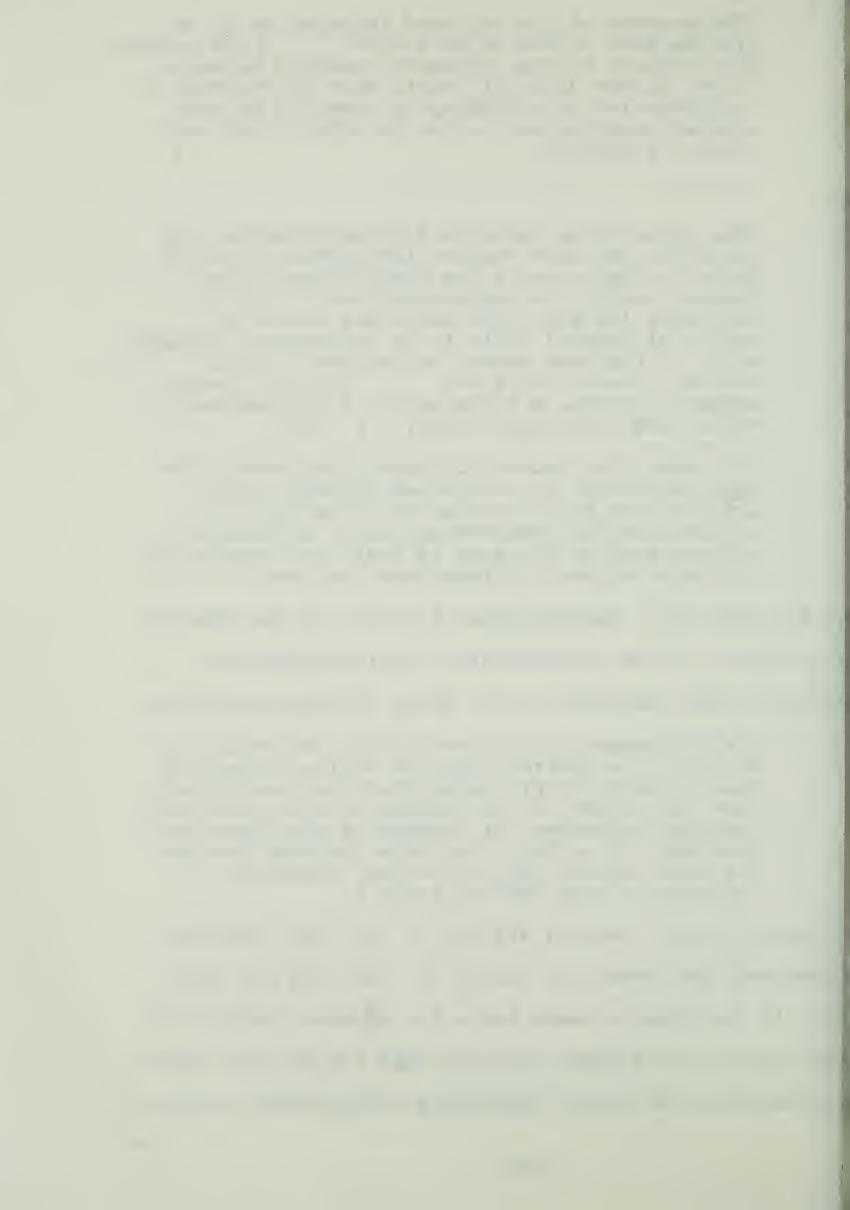
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"In order that Federal litigants may obtain the same protection as is offered in State court actions, the bill provides that the State law authorizing the registering, etc., of Federal notices must be the same as that for registering of State notices in State court actions . . . "

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Deputy Attorney General writing to the same committee of advised that committee that H. R. 7306 did not apply ess (1) the State already had a lis pendens statute and the laws of that State also provided for similar record-of notice of an action concerning real property pending



Defendant urges that this court has no power to cel the lis pendens or the registry of the same with

As was said in <u>Dice v. Bender</u>, 11/ A2d 725, Pa. 94 (1955):

"The contention was there, as here, that the los upon the properties obtained by the lis pendens could not be set aside by the court. This contention indicates a misapprehension of the ductring in question . . . [T]he effect of a lis pend ... is not to establish actual liens upon the propert en affected nor has it any application as between the parties to the action themselves; all that it does is to give notice to third persons that any interest they may acquire in the properties pending the litigation will be subject to the result of the action . . . [L] ong before the enactment of any statutory regulations on the subject, the mere pendency of a suit in equity affecting the title to real property was held, both at common law and in equity, to constitute constructive notice thereof to all the world, and the registry statutes, so far from creating the doctrine, actually limited its application by making it effective only if the action were indexed in accordance with the statutory requirements. In short, being a creature not of statute but of common law and equity jurisprudence, the doctrine of lis pendens is wholly subject to equitable principles. Thus, . . . if the operation of the doctrine should prove to be harsh or arbitrary in particular instances, equity can and should refuse to give it effect, and, under its power to remove a cloud on title, can and should cancel a notice of lis pendens which might otherwise exist.

* * * *

"The court below undoubtedly had the inherent power to remove what was an unwarranted cloud on defendants' title . . . "

From <u>King v. Davis</u> (cited by the defendant), <u>supra</u> ?27-8, it is manifest that when a party has lost a !t by fraud, accident or mistake -- particularly as here